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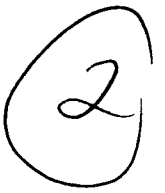

# CONFEDERATE STAFF WORK AT CHICKAMAUGA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE STAFF OF THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1992

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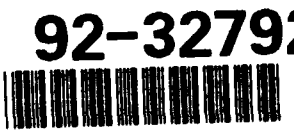

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This thesis analyzes the roles, functional organization, and performance of the staff of the Army of Tennessee and its subordinate corps during the Chickamauga campaign, 16 August - 22 September 1863. Primary sources for staff personnel and interaction include the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, and the Compiled Service Records of staff officers. Large Civil War armies like the Army of Tennessee had significant numbe rs of staff personnel. Staffs existed at each level of command from regiment through field army. Staff officers had responsibilities in three broad areas: personnel and logistical support to the army, military administration, and command and control. Staff performance is evaluated in terms of doctrine and practices as embodied in regulations and military literature of the day. The study concludes that staff performance was adequate in the areas of administration and logistical support, but not in providing a functional command and control system. The staff's failure in this area had a significant negative impact on the performance of the army as a whole.

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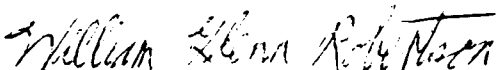
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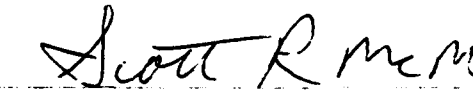
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## ABSTRACT

CONFEDERATE STAFF WORK AT CHICKAMAUGA: an analysis of the staff of the Army of Tennessee, by Major Robert L. Johnson, USA, 155 pages.

One of the critical variables in the successful completion of a military campaign is the functioning of an army's command and control system. In the American Civil War, a commander's primary command and control tool was his staff.

Large Civil War armies like the Army of Tennessee required significant numbers of staff personnel. Staffs existed at each level of command from regiment through the army level. Staff officers had responsibility in three broad areas: personnel and logistical support to the army, military administration, and command and control.

This thesis analyzes the roles, functional organization, and performance of the staff of the Army of Tennessee and its subordinate corps during the Chickamauga campaign, 16 August - 22 September 1863. Primary sources for staff personnel include the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, and the Compiled Service Records of staff officers. Staff performance is evaluated in terms of doctrine and practices as embodied in regulations and military literature of the day.

This thesis concludes that, while staff performance was adequate in administration and logistical support, the performance of the command and control system was inadequate. The staff's failure in this area had a significant negative impact on the performance of the army as a whole.

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## INTRODUCTION

> "On assuming this command, General Washington found an heterogeneous and undisciplined force which, on the call of the Massachusetts committee of safety on the morning after the affair at Lexington and Concord, had assembled at Cambridge in a motley host of full 20,000 men, and immediately took measures to bring order out of confusion. Joseph Reed, of Philadelphia was chosen by him for the important post of Secretary to the Commander in Chief. Horatio Gates was appointed Adjutant-General, Thomas Mifflin, Quartermaster-General, and Joseph Trumbull, Commissary-General."[1]
>
> Corbin and Thian

Military forces in the United States have depended on good staff work since the days of the Revolution. The staff of the Army, and those of its field forces and their subordinate organizations, have grown in importance since then. During the Civil War, a good staff was a commander's only command and control system. While telegraphy introduced modern communications into the command and control system at the national level, it remained irrelevant on the battlefield, and largely so in the maneuvers by which commanders sought to bring their opponents to that battlefield. Signal flags were often impracticable as a communications system. Therefore, his staff was often the commander's only available communications system.

A modern view of the purpose of a command and control system is to "implement the commander's will in pursuit of the unit's objectives."[2] This purpose has not changed since the early development of military staffs. The staff connects the commander with his subordinate leaders, and through them with the soldiers he leads. It provides him with a means of gathering information about his own and the enemy's dispositions, forces, and capabilities. It informs him as well about the physical environment of his theater of operations. He can then exercise his judgement and develop his own vision of the proper means to achieve his mission. His staff then helps him in translating that vision into plans of operations, communicating those plans to his subordinates, and supervising the execution of the operation.

This thesis will examine the staff of the Confederate Army of Tennessee to assess the effect of their performance on a major campaign. The campaign examined is the Chickamauga campaign from 16 August to 22 September 1863. The thesis will examine the performance of General Braxton Bragg's army staff, as well as those of his subordinate corps commanders. During this campaign, General Bragg commanded the Army of Tennessee, the Confederacy's major western army. Time and technological improvements have changed staff roles and relationships since the Civil War. However, the essential functions of a staff remain unchanged.

Large Civil War armies (when reinforced for this campaign, the Army of Tennessee had a strength of about 70,000[3]) required a significant staff. Such a staff must do three things. First, it must help the commander see the battlefield. It does this by informing the commander on the status and capabilities of his own army; the dispositions, capabilities and intentions of the opposing force; and the nature and limitations of the terrain. Second, it must assist the commander in developing and transmitting orders and plans to allow the accomplishment of the army's mission. Third, it must monitor subordinate units in the execution of their missions, acting as the commander's 'directed telescope.' In addition to these operational imperatives, a staff must accomplish the routine administration and logistical support of the army. It must coordinate with higher and lower commanders and their staffs, executing the commander's guidance to achieve his intended purpose.

Both the Union and Confederate armies entered the Civil War with underdeveloped staff systems and an inadequate pool of professional staff personnel. Both drew upon the developing staff experience of the U.S. Army. In this experience, the term 'staff officer' was often synonymous with departmental administrator. In an army that consciously looked to European armies for guidance, surprisingly little note was taken of European staff development. The Delafield Commission (Majors Delafield and Mordecai, and

Captain George B. McClellan) spent two years in Europe (1855-1857) examining military developments in the major powers. Their report, The Art of War in Europe, focused on fortifications, weapons, and military gadgetry. It missed the significant developments in European staff systems, especially those of Prussia.[4] The staff system that developed in America was adequate for an army of small postings and Indian warfare. Both the Union and Confederate armies wrestled with the problem of transforming their staff systems into something that could handle the problems of mass armies.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One outlines the events of the Chickamauga campaign and the Battle of Chickamauga. Its focus is on the operational objectives and decisions made by the army commander. Chapter Two discusses the Confederate Army staff system: its antecedents in the U.S. Army, how the Confederate War Department and staff departments were organized, and how this organization was mirrored in the field armies. Chapter Three examines the staff organization of the Army of Tennessee and its subordinate corps: their organization, functional relationships, and personnel. Chapter Four evaluates the performance of the Army of Tennessee's staff during the Chickamauga campaign and battle. Chapter Five assesses the effect that the staff's performance had on the outcome of the battle, and examines relevant lessons for today.

## NOTES

[1]Henry C. Corbin and Raphael P. Thian, comp., Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 3.

[2]U.S. Army, Field Manual 100-5, Operations (Washington: Hq, Department of the Army, 1988), 21.

[3]Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 449.

[4]James D. Hittle, The Military Staff (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1961; reprint, Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 186-89.

## CHAPTER ONE

## CAMPAIGN FOR THE HEARTLAND

### PART I: PRELUDE

> "The battle of Chickamauga was, I think, the hardest fight that I have ever been engaged in. It lasted longer, and was more obstinately contested than any other, and from the numbers engaged, it was certainly on a grander scale and more imposing. The fire we got under when first we became engaged in the morning exceeded anything I have ever before or after experienced. The air seemed alive with bullets, and an officer afterwards remarked to me, 'General, all you had to do was hold out your hand and catch them.' Out of about 800 men that came into the full fury of this storm, nearly 300 were shot down in a space of time certainly not exceeding three minutes."[1]
>
> Arthur M. Manigault

In September of 1863, Confederate General Braxton Bragg waited in Chattanooga, Tennessee for the advance of General Rosecrans, his Union opponent and the commanding general of the Army of the Cumberland. The summer had not been a good one for Confederate arms. By July 4th, Lee had lost at Gettysburg, destroying the Army of Northern Virginia as an offensive weapon in the process. The same day, Pemberton surrendered his army to Grant at Vicksburg, and the Confederacy lost both its hold on the Mississippi River and

contact with the Trans-Mississippi. Also that day, Bragg completed his retreat from Tullahoma, crossing the Tennessee River into Chattanooga.

Chattanooga was strategically vital to the Confederacy. It was a critical rail junction, linking together Virginia, Atlanta, North Carolina, middle and western Tennessee, northern Mississippi, and Alabama. Its loss would deprive the Confederates of access to the products and natural resources of this region. In addition, Union possession of Chattanooga placed Federal armies in the very heart of the South, astride both the direct route to Atlanta and the back door to Virginia. Any Confederate forces west of the city would be effectively cut off.

The outcome of the Chickamauga campaign would determine the ability of the Confederate forces to hold Chattanooga. Bragg's strategic objective was to protect eastern Tennessee and north Georgia, maintaining the region's lines of communication with the eastern Confederacy. This would also allow the Confederacy access to the resources of Alabama and Mississippi. To accomplish this objective, he had to hold the road and rail hub at Chattanooga; prevent a crossing of the Tennessee River, or destroy any Union force making such a crossing. These were the operational objectives of the Chickamauga campaign.

During the Tullahoma campaign just concluded, Bragg virtually handed middle Tennessee to Rosecrans, retreating

from Tullahoma to Chattanooga. Along the way, he marched past defensible positions on the Elk River and at Cowan, Tennessee. Bragg's indecision and the mutual mistrust existing between him and his corps commanders (Hardee and Polk) lay at the root of this withdrawal. Rosecrans gained middle Tennessee, denied Bragg easy access to north Alabama, and secured multiple routes to continue his advance. He won it all at a cost of only 570 men.[2]

At the end of the Tullahoma campaign both armies were tired from marches over roads-turned-quagmires, the result of two weeks of steady rains. Bragg's Army of Tennessee hunkered down into its base at Chattanooga. Rosecrans' army settled into Tullahoma. Both sought to rest men and horses, and repair their materiel. Bragg had also to replace his losses. Hardee's corps took the bulk of the losses, with present for duty strength reduced by almost 1800. Bragg's cavalry was also severely depleted. Effective cavalry strength was 5200 less after the campaign than Bragg had started with.[3] These losses were due more to desertion and attrition among the horses than to contact with Union forces.

In Chattanooga, the Army of Tennessee began constructing fortifications. Bragg attempted to make the city his supply base, the hub of his operations, and a fortress to withstand Federal attack. From Chattanooga ran the Western and Atlantic railroad to Atlanta in the southeast. To

the west the Memphis and Charleston railroad ran to northern Alabama. The Nashville and Chattanooga railroad from middle Tennessee came in from the west as well. To the northeast ran the East Tennessee and Georgia railroad, connected with Knoxville and Bristol, Tennessee, and Lynchburg, Virginia. This railroad network connected the eastern Confederacy with the copper and foodstuffs of eastern Tennessee, the nitre of north Alabama, and the manufacturing center of north Georgia.

Between Bragg in Chattanooga and Rosecrans in Tullahoma (to Bragg's northwest), lay difficult terrain (see Map 1). North and west of Chattanooga stretches Walden's Ridge and the Cumberland plateau. The narrow Sequatchie River valley separates these mountain ridges. If Rosecrans was to move by his left against Bragg's right, he would have to move by way of McMinnville, using poor roads across both ridges into the upper Tennessee valley. No railroad supported this move forward of McMinnville. The country is still rough and cross-compartmented. It had little subsistence, and the road network was inadequate for large numbers of artillery or quartermasters wagons. Its use by Rosecrans placed his army between that of Bragg and the one commanded by Confederate Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner, opposite Burnside at Knoxville.

Bragg's center was also difficult to approach. To come at Chattanooga from the north bank of the Tennessee,

Map 1: Approaches to Chattanooga

Rosecrans again had to contend with the Cumberland Plateau and Walden's Ridge. An alternative was to try to come at Chattanooga from the west, along the Tennessee's north bank. This approach uses the narrow gap between Walden's Ridge north of the river, and Raccoon Mountain on the south bank of the Tennessee. However, this required multiple crossings of the Tennessee. Raccoon Mountain and Lookout Mountain, ridges to the west of Chattanooga, along the Tennessee's south bank, dominate the route through river valley below.

The last approach to the center of Bragg's army was to approach from the west, well south of the river itself. This approach traverses the Raccoon Mountain-Sand Mountain ridge complex. This complex extends Walden's Ridge onto the south side of the Tennessee River. It runs from just west of Chattanooga, across the tip of Georgia, and into Alabama. This high ground forms the western side of Lookout Valley. The other wall of this narrow valley is Lookout Mountain, running southwest from Chattanooga to Gadsden, Alabama. Access to this approach required crossing the Tennessee near Bridgeport, where a road ran across Raccoon Mountain and into Lookout Valley.

For Rosecrans to move on Bragg's left flank (the Union right), he would have to contend with four separate ridge complexes. Racoon-Sand and Lookout Mountains both widened as they extended into Alabama. In addition, two spurs parallelled these mountains south of Chattanooga.

Missionary Ridge starts on the south bank or the Tennessee, runs to the east of Chattanooga, and extends south for about thirty miles. It is broken by several gaps. In the valley formed by Missionary Ridge on the east and Lookout Mountain on the west, the Chattanooga Creek runs north to the Tennessee. Pigeon Mountain is an offshoot of Missionary Ridge, east of the main ridge, and separated from it by a valley through which runs West Chickamauga Creek. Pigeon Mountain runs for about 25 miles, broken by Dug Gap and Catlett's Gap as its major crossing points.

Each of these approaches held disadvantages for Rosecrans. Moving by his left required a torturous supply effort forward of McMinnville, over bad roads and through an area of little sustenance. In addition, it offered one flank to Bragg, and another to Buckner. On the other hand, it offered the opportunity to cooperate with Burnside and prevent a juncture between Bragg's forces and Buckner's. Using a central approach allowed for better logistical support over the Nashville and Chattanooga railroad, but would again be dependent on poor roads if the Confederates held Raccoon Mountain in strength. Finally, movement by his right required Rosecrans to disperse his army and make his final approach to Chattanooga in one of the narrow, easily blocked valleys running up to the town from the southwest. The right flank approach, despite this hazard, offered to Rosecrans the best opportunity to maneuver Bragg's army out

of Chattanooga, instead of fighting him for the town. For it was essential that Rosecrans take Chattanooga, if he was to develop a base to sustain a further advance into Georgia.

After the withdrawal from Tullahoma, General Bragg rearranged the Army of Tennessee's senior commanders. Lieutenant General Hardee was detached in mid-July to take command of Pemberton's remnants in Demopolis, Georgia. Replacing him was D. H. Hill, newly arrived from North Carolina and awaiting congressional confirmation of his promotion to Lieutenant General.[4] Also newly arrived was Major General Thomas Hindman. On the 13th of August, he was appointed to replace Major General Withers as a division commander.[5] On the same day, Brigadier General Deshler was moved from command of the reserve artillery to that of Churchill's Brigade.[6]

One measure of the relative strength of the Army of Tennessee is given by Lieutenant Colonel Oladowski, the army Chief of Ordnance, writing on 13 August 1863 to Colonel M. H. Wright at the Atlanta Arsenal. The message discussed ammunition requirements as follows:

> ". . .it will be necessary to have ammunition of small arms of different calibers for 40,000, being 10,500 caliber .577; 3,600 caliber .58; 12,000 caliber .69; 2,000 caliber .54; 3,000 caliber .53; 900 caliber .70; and for cavalry arms as Sharps, Maynard, shot-gun, hall, Smith, musketoon, &c.
>
> "Artillery consists of twenty-one 12-pounder light guns, thirty-five 6-pounders, forty 12-pounder howitzers, two 20-pounder Parrotts, ten 3-inch iron

> rifle [sic], ten 3.8 brass rifled, two 3.65 Wiards, and seven 10-pounder Parrotts. . . .We will have also two 24 rifle guns."[7]

Table 1 is an abstract of the personnel return for the Army of Tennessee on 20 August 1863. It shows only a slight improvement in Bragg's present for duty strength since 10 July (just more than 2200 men added).

Meanwhile, the government in Richmond considered the reinforcement of Bragg's army. There were three possible sources. The first was to attach some or all of Buckner's force to Bragg. This could only be done if the Federal force under Burnside remained quiet in Knoxville. On 22 July, Adjutant-General Cooper in Richmond wrote to both Bragg and Buckner, announcing the "decision to extend your [Bragg's] command over the department of General Buckner, and constitute yours as a separate and independent command." Buckner, however, would "still continue to correspond directly with this office."[8] The merger of the two commands was announced in Special Orders No. 176, on 25 July.[9]

Buckner's Army of East Tennessee was organized into five infantry and two cavalry brigades. Total strength on 31 July was 15,160 present for duty (8,169 infantry, 5,759 cavalry, 1,167 artillery). By 10 days later it was 427 less (14,733 present for duty: 7,767 infantry, 5,758 cavalry, 1,140 artillery). For Buckner, desertion, especially from the regiments raised in North Carolina and east Tennessee,

Table 1: Army of Tennessee Unit Strengths, 20 August 1863[10]

| Command | Officer | Enlisted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Army of Tennessee* | | | |
| GHQ: | | | |
| Escort | 3 | 133 | 136 |
| Sappers | 4 | 101 | 105 |
| Total | 7 | 234 | 241 |
| Polk's Corps: | | | |
| Staff and Escorts | 26 | 131 | 157 |
| Cheatham's Division | 657 | 5942 | 6599 |
| Hindman's Division | 661 | 8133 | 8794 |
| Artillery | 34 | 760 | 794 |
| Total | 1378 | 14966 | 16344 |
| Hill's Corps: | | | |
| Staff and Escorts | 24 | 57 | 81 |
| Cleburne's Division | 573 | 6912 | 7485 |
| Stewart's Division | 512 | 5996 | 6508 |
| Artillery | 31 | 647 | 678 |
| Total | 1140 | 13612 | 14752 |
| Wheeler's Corps | | | |
| Cavalry | 595 | 6377 | 6972 |
| Artillery | 10 | 260 | 270 |
| Total | 605 | 6637 | 7242 |
| Forrest's Division | | | |
| Cavalry | 290 | 3540 | 3830 |
| Artillery | 9 | 127 | 136 |
| Total | 299 | 3667 | 3966 |
| Jackson's Brigade | | | |
| Infantry | 118 | 1230 | 1348 |
| Artillery | 7 | 136 | 143 |
| Total | 125 | 1366 | 1491 |
| Artillery Reserve | 35 | 573 | 608 |
| **Army Totals** | **3589** | **41055** | **44644** |

* Army Headquarters staff not included in the totals.

was a particular problem.[11] The command spread over parts of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky.[12] Concentration of its combat forces would take time to effect over bad roads. Some of its forces would have to be left to cover the Cumberland Gap, as well as Burnside's force at Knoxville. Still, placing Buckner under Bragg's command increased Bragg's flexibility in meeting Rosecrans' next move. This would become especially important if Rosecrans moved to his left in cooperation with Burnside.

A second alternative was to detach troops from General Joseph E. Johnston in Mississippi, if Union General U. S. Grant's force remained quiet. Johnston's department had a present for duty strength of 25,350, organized into four infantry and one cavalry divisions. Another 3640 cavalrymen were organized into local commands. Table 2 shows the strength of these organizations on 20 August.

Table 2: Unit Strengths, Dept. of Mississippi and East Louisiana, 20 August 1863[13]

| Command | Officer | Enlisted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dept. of Mississippi and East Louisiana: | | | |
| Loring's Division | 530 | 5015 | 5545 |
| Breckenridge's Division | 348 | 4673 | 5021 |
| Walker's Division | 540 | 6704 | 7244 |
| French's Division | 396 | 3105 | 3501 |
| Jackson's Cavalry | 339 | 3441 | 3780 |
| Reserve Artillery | 15 | 244 | 259 |
| Chalmers' Cavalry | 142 | 1081 | 1223 |
| Logan's Cavalry | 62 | 516 | 578 |
| Ruggles' Command | 136 | 1703 | 1839 |
| Total | 2508 | 26482 | 28990 |

From Richmond, Secretary of War James A. Seddon asked General Hardee on 29 July if he could take part of his command to assist Bragg. Hardee showed the request to Johnston, his superior, who agreed in principle to the reinforcement of Bragg, if necessary.[14] On 1 August, Cooper asked Bragg if he could "attack the enemy" if "we can spare most of Johnston's army, temporarily, to reinforce you."[15] Bragg's initial response was that such an attack could succeed, until he discovered the true extent of Johnston's forces. By the 5th, he told Cooper, "After fully examining all resources, I deem them insufficient to justify a movement across the mountains."[16]

The discussion about whether to reinforce Bragg from Johnston's department, whether such reinforcements would allow Bragg to attack either Rosecrans or Burnside, or whether the reinforcements should be sent to Buckner to allow an attack into Kentucky went on over the telegraph until the 21st of August. That was the day the first Federal shells fell into Chattanooga. Bragg was on the wire that day to Johnston, asking for help "promptly." Johnston asked Richmond for instructions, and offered two divisions to help Bragg. Adjutant-General Cooper wired back to proceed.[17] Orders were issued the 23d for Walker's and Breckenridge's divisions to move to Chattanooga. Informing Bragg of his actions Johnston stressed that these troops were "a loan to

be promptly returned." Johnston expected it would take until the 27th to have all the units depart for Chattanooga.[18]

The only other feasible source for reinforcements was from the Army of Northern Virginia, back in Virginia after their operations in the Gettysburg campaign. Such a strategic concentration had long been advocated by the adherents of the 'western concentration bloc'. This group of officers and politicians viewed the West as the decisive theater of the war, and consistently argued for a concentrated effort in this theater. Lieutenant General James Longstreet, General Lee's principal corps commander, had suggested reinforcing Bragg from Lee's army in both January and May 1863.[19] Now, after Gettysburg, he again suggested it. He wrote Secretary of War Seddon in August, urging the transfer of troops from Lee's army to Bragg's.[20] "I think it is time that we begin to do something in the west," Longstreet wrote to Lee on September 5, "and I fear if it is put off any longer we shall be too late."[21]

Late in August, General Lee conferred in Richmond with President Davis. Davis at first wanted to send Lee to assume command in the West, but agreed when Lee demurred. That settled, Davis decided to send Longstreet with his First Corps. Lee arranged with the Quartermaster-General for the transport of Longstreet's corps on 6 September.[22]

By the 8th of September Longstreet's troops were enroute from the Rapidan to the Richmond rail depots.[23]

Three weeks delay was caused by the time taken to make this decision - from mid-August to early September. This meant that when Longstreet arrived with his corps, he would be too late to allow Bragg to begin an operational offensive. Burnside marched into Knoxville on 3 September. Three days later, all of east Tennessee north of the Hiwassee River was under Union control. As a result, the direct rail link between Chattanooga and Virginia was severed. Longstreet's corps would now have to travel through Charlotte, Augusta, and Atlanta. The trip would be one on a variety of gauges and cars. One stretch of the road was a single track line between South Carolina and Atlanta. So added to the delay for a decision was now a delay due to a poor rail network. Only five brigades of Longstreet's corps would reach Bragg for the second day of Chickamauga. They would arrive tired, without horses, and ahead of their artillery.[24]

With the arrival of Longstreet and his corps, Richmond's strategic concentration of troops was complete. Bragg had now been reinforced by Buckner, Johnston, and Lee. His task was to use these resources for the rapid defeat of Rosecrans and reopening the rail links to the eastern Confederacy. Whether he was successful would depend on his ability to make these disparate forces into an army.

## PART II: THE CHICKAMAUGA CAMPAIGN:

## MANEUVER AND BATTLE

General Bragg's ability to use effectively the forces sent him from the Confederacy's other theaters would hinge on his ability to anticipate Rosecrans' advance. The terrain over which the campaign would be fought offered too many avenues of approach for Bragg to block them all. He must use that terrain to provide security for his army, discover Rosecrans' intended route of advance, and concentrate the Army of Tennessee to block the Federals. Failure to do this would jeopardize the success made possible by the strategic concentration of Confederate forces.

Two factors thus became critical. One was Bragg's deployment of his army to maximize his terrain advantages. The other was the choice by Rosecrans of the route of his main effort, and the deception measures he used to conceal it. Bragg's deployment reflected a defensive mindset. After the Tullahoma campaign, Bragg's army assumed the tactical defensive. Even in such a posture it was possible to take the operational initiative by aggressive use of cavalry screening and reconnaissance. This could allow for the early detection of Rosecrans' intent. Then the Army of

Tennessee could use the difficult terrain to block Rosecrans, gaining time to maneuver to defeat the Federal forces. This kind of campaign offered the opportunity to keep the initiative by taking the operational offensive, while fighting on the tactical defensive, which was the stronger form of battle.

In deploying his forces after the retreat to Chattanooga, General Bragg had several factors to balance. The bulk of his army needed an opportunity to rest and refit. The infantry would play an important role in fortifying and garrisoning the town. Both factors argued for keeping the infantry corps concentrated in the Chattanooga area, his logistics base. Also, this concentration simplified a move to block Rosecrans if his main effort was detected. Both artillery and cavalry had suffered significant attrition in horses during the Tullahoma campaign. This reduced the effectiveness of Bragg's cavalry just when it most needed to conduct aggressive screening to monitor Rosecrans.

Compounding this problem was the fact that Bragg relied on his cavalry for the bulk of his intelligence. The retreat to Chattanooga had placed too many miles between Bragg and Rosecrans for other methods to be effective enough. Bragg's Provost Marshall, Colonel Alex McKinstry, ran a network of spies and scouts. These were often soldiers recruited from the Army of Tennessee for their knowledge of the surrounding country. This effort was poorly

organized and seldom effective. Over the 120 or more miles of Union pickets and cavalry patrols, these untrained scouts had little chance to contribute effectively.[25] The burden was therefore on the cavalrymen. Table 3 shows the attrition in this arm caused by the Tullahoma campaign. Over the two months before the start of the Chickamauga campaign, the effective strength of the cavalry (the present for duty figures) fell steadily, while the muster rolls showed little loss.

**Table 3: Cavalry Strength in the Army of Tennessee: The Effects of the Tullahoma Campaign of 1863**[26]

| Category and Unit | 10 June | 20 July | 10 August |
|---|---|---|---|
| Present for Duty: | | | |
| Wheeler's Corps | 9789 | 5417 | 6895 |
| Forrest's Division | 3629 | 3672 | 3702 |
| Army of Tennessee | 13418 | 9089 | 10597 |
| Aggregate Present: | | | |
| Wheeler's Corps | 11756 | 6791 | 8914 |
| Forrest's Division | 4039 | 4562 | 4570 |
| Army of Tennessee | 15795 | 11353 | 13484 |
| Aggregate Present & Absent | | | |
| Wheeler's Corps | 15786 | 15481 | 18942 |
| Forrest's Division | 9442 | 6664 | 6489 |
| Army of Tennessee | 25288 | 22145 | 25431 |

In replacing these losses, the most significant need was for horses. Throughout the war, the Confederate cavalry trooper had to furnish his own mounts. By the summer of 1863, this was increasingly difficult. The present for duty

strengths of Table 3 show more than the effect of the rear-guard action just finished. They also show the effect of men furloughed to find mounts, as well as of the desertion caused by their inability to do so.

These cavalry formations, depleted as they were, could still have produced the intelligence Bragg needed if properly deployed and sustained in position. The deployment of the army's cavalry at the beginning of the Chickamauga campaign was terrible. No forces were kept on the north side of the Tennessee River. The initial deployment placed Wheeler's Corps below (i.e., west and south of) Kelly's Ford, Forrest's Division above the ford. The order giving these instructions said nothing about maintaining contact with the Federal army. Instead, the fords "will be strictly watched to prevent desertion."[27] Wheeler's Corps was eventually extended into Alabama, with the corps headquarters at Gadsden. By the time of Rosecrans' advance, Wheeler's screen along the river consisted of two regiments covering the entire distance between Chattanooga and Decatur, Alabama. To supplement the cavalry, Brigadier General Patton Anderson's Brigade was posted along the river from Bridgeport to Shellmound (a distance of about six miles along the river) to "guard the river." Anderson extended his guard "to the mouth of Island Creek, about 5 miles below Bridgeport."[28]

In the correspondence and after action reports of the campaign, there is little evidence of any serious effort to use the terrain north of the river for cavalry screening efforts. Tying the cavalrymen to the river resulted in a defensive posture that surrendered the initiative to the Union army. It also required coverage of a long line with depleted assets. Use of Walden's Ridge and the Cumberland Plateau north of the river would have required the coverage of less terrain, and still allowed observation of the approaches to Chattanooga. As deployed by Wheeler and Forrest, Confederate cavalry surrendered the key terrain around Jasper, Stevenson, Bridgeport, Walden's Ridge, and the Sequatchie Valley. Concession of this terrain to Rosecrans meant that intelligence of his movement to cross the Tennessee would come too late to prevent the crossing.

On the Union side, General Rosecrans had to decide what his operational objective was, then how to achieve it. Given the difficult terrain, he would also have to deceive General Bragg about his main effort to avoid being bottled up in narrow ground. For his part, Bragg would have to pierce the Union deception efforts to see the main attack. Then he would have to rapidly maneuver his army to thwart the Union advance. Bragg had two main concerns. First, he had to protect against a juncture of Burnside and Rosecrans on his right flank. Such a combination would require that he face greatly superior numbers coming toward Chattanooga

down the Tennessee Valley. Once in the Valley and south of the river, this was the best approach to the city. Second, he had to guard his communications with Atlanta. Rosecrans could threaten these by trying to slide past Bragg's left flank. Although the terrain was more difficult here, the multiple routes south of the river that would put Rosecrans past Bragg's army made the defender's task harder. Too, there were several ways for Union forces to come at Chattanooga from this direction.

Bragg knew these facts. In January 1863, Major James Nocquet, then the Chief Engineer for Department No. 2, had written an analysis of the approaches to Chattanooga that emphasized the route over Kelly's Ford and Lookout Mountain.[29] On the 21st of July Patton Anderson reported the movement of Federal troops forward of Stevenson by rail, indicating the repair of the rail line north of the river to that point.[30] That same day, Union artillery shelled Chattanooga from north of the river. Enemy units were reported that day at Brown's ferry, moving down Sweeden's Cove to Jasper, and again at Brown's Ferry.[31] These sightings were west of Chattanooga, indicating a possible move by Rosecrans against Bragg's left. Simultaneously, General Buckner was reporting from Knoxville that Burnside was moving toward the gaps northwest of the city.[32] This would allow Burnside to cooperate with a movement by Rosecrans to his left across

Walden's Ridge. Buckner was assembling his force to base it at Loudon, to allow cooperation with Bragg.

Bragg's initial plan was "to await developments of the enemy and when his point of attack is ascertained, to neglect all smaller matters and fall on him with our whole force."[33] Meanwhile, he was sending the requests for help that caused the reinforcement described earlier. But the focus of his attention was clearly on the approaches to the north of Chattanooga. Although by noon on August 22d the pickets west of Chattanooga reported a Union crossing of the Tennessee at Shellmound, the message traffic for that day shows the main Confederate effort concentrated near the mouths of Chickamauga Creek and the Hiwassee River.[34] The infantry brigades that had augmented the cavalry pickets west of Chattanooga were withdrawn, and others moved upriver. The south bank of the Tennessee was extensively picketed north of Chattanooga. The message General Buckner sent to Bragg's chief of staff on the 23d expresses the view of the situation which Bragg, Hill, Polk, and Buckner seemed to share.

> "My latest information though not positive is credited and is as follows: Burnside's main column will move by Jamestown. It is expected to co-operate with Rosecrans' left. His cavalry will probably cross the mountains to the railroad above here. Rosecrans designs to cross the Tennessee above the Hiwassee. Burnside's strength is exaggerated by report to 50,000. . . . By co-operating with you we may effect something against Rosecrans before junction of their armies."[35]

A crossing by Rosecrans of the Tennessee above the Hiwassee would split Bragg and Buckner if the latter held to Knoxville. It would indicate that Rosecrans' operational objective was Bragg's Army, and the likely Union course of action was an attempt to trap it in Chattanooga. Bragg therefore had ordered Buckner to abandon the Knoxville, and move to Loudon to simplify cooperation between them.[36] Until the 28th of August, reports to Bragg continued to indicate that Rosecrans was moving to his left (Bragg's right). As time passed without an attempt by Rosecrans to cross the river, he was assumed to be waiting for Burnside to join him. Bragg shifted forces even further to his right, sending Stewart's Division to Loudon to reinforce Buckner.[37] Not until the 1st of September was the evidence of a crossing below Chattanooga too much to ignore. General Wheeler's detachment at Trenton, Georgia reported heavy Union cavalry in the area on the night of 31 August.[38]

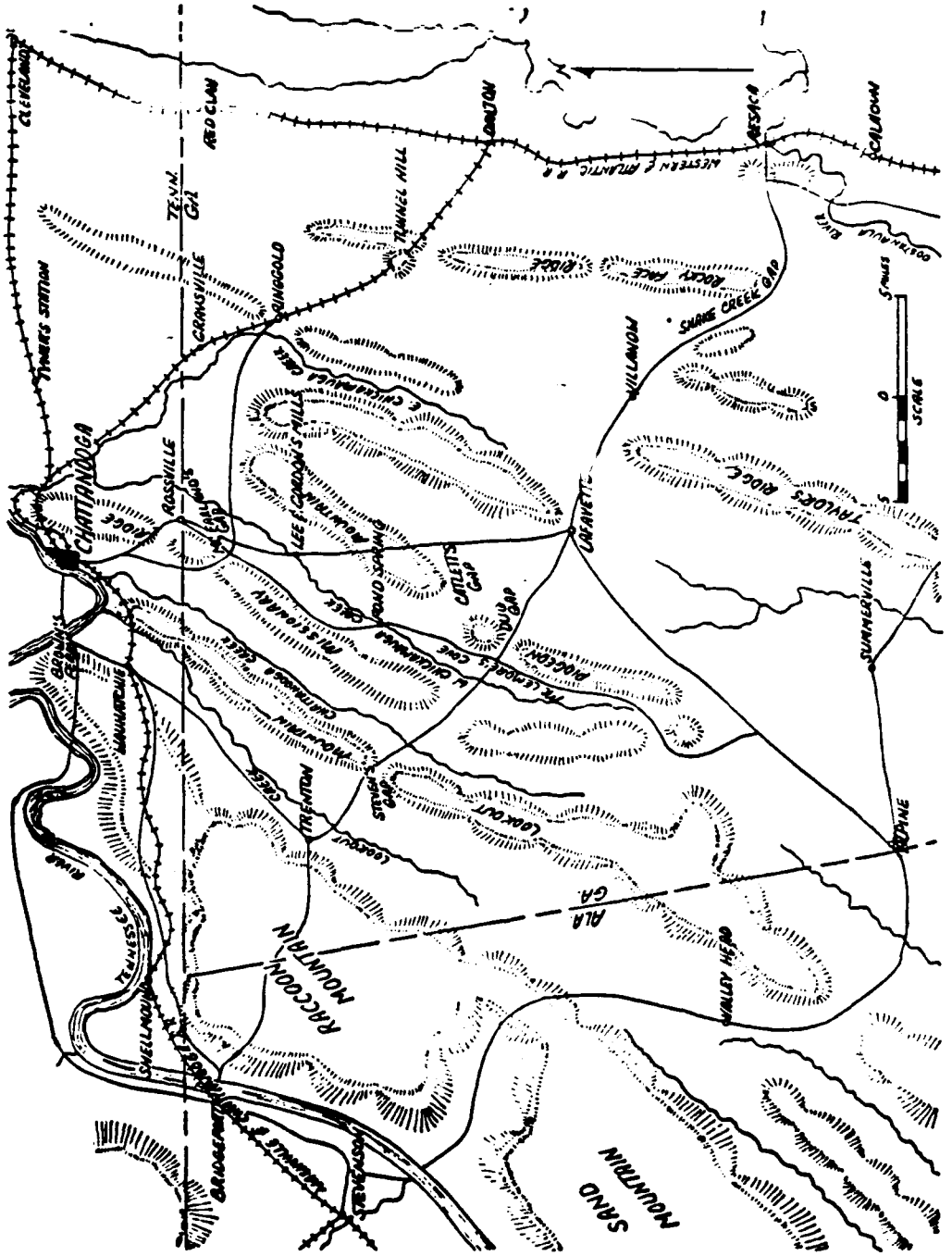
The realization of the true location of Rosecrans' main attack caught the Army of Tennessee seriously out of position. Wheeler's cavalry was still largely in Alabama and Georgia. The infantry was concentrated in the area between Chattanooga and Harrison's Landing (about ten miles north of the city). Buckner's Corps was at Loudon. Rosecrans' operational objective now seemed clearly to be the Confederate lines of communication to Atlanta. If he could really threaten these, he would have maneuvered Bragg out of

Chattanooga as cheaply as he had won Tullahoma. Some shifts of forces were made based on this new information. General Polk was directed to outpost Lookout Mountain and the Rossville Road with a brigade in each location. General Wheeler was asked for more information about the enemy at Trenton and in Will's Valley.[39] To simplify its recovery, and to increase the strength of Buckner's Corps, Stewart's Division was transferred to it the 1st of September. Bragg's message on the 2d to Secretary Seddon reveals both his understanding of the situation, and his indecision on what to do about it.

> "Rosecrans' main force has crossed the Tennessee below Bridgeport opposite Stevenson. He is 60 miles from us, with two ranges of barren mountains interposed. Unable to hold so long a line, without sacrificing my force in detail, Buckner has been drawn this way so as to ensure a junction at any time. Burnside was 60 miles from Knoxville at last accounts. We shall assail either party, or both, whenever practicable."[40]

Bragg delayed deciding which way to commit his forces until the night of September 7th. That night the decision was finally made to abandon Chattanooga in the morning. Almost the entire army was on the move the next day, protected by Wheeler's cavalry screen. By the night of September 8th, the Confederate units were arrayed as shown in Map 2. Hill's Corps (Cleburne's and Breckenridge's divisions) was in La Fayette. Polk's Corps (Cheatham's and Hindman's divisions) about ten miles north in Crawfish

Map 2: Chickamauga Campaign Area



Valley. Buckner's Corps (Stewart's and Preston's divisions) and the *ad hoc* Reserve Corps (Walker's and Liddell's divisions), commanded by Major General W. H. T. Walker, were on the Ringgold road. Wheeler's cavalry corps (Martin's and Wharton's divisions) maintained their picket line, which still stretched from Chattanooga to Gadsden, Alabama. Finally, Forrest's new corps, made up of his own division and Pegram's division from Buckner's old Department of East Tennessee, was scattered in the vicinity of Dalton, Georgia.[41]

The Union forces were deployed in three widely separated corps. Major General Crittenden's XXI Corps was still on the north bank of the Tennessee, opposite Chattanooga, which he would enter on the 9th. Major General Thomas' XIV Corps was crossing Lookout Mountain twenty miles south of the city. Major General McCook's XX Corps was far up Lookout Valley, near Valley Head, moving toward Alpine, enroute to the Western & Atlantic Railroad at Rome, Georgia.

Neither side knew much about the other's positions in any detail. The intentions of each side were also not clear. Bragg seemed to still be looking for a chance to bring his army to bear on a part of Rosecrans'. He was hampered by an inability to find the true disposition of the Union army. Bragg's intentions perhaps were no more clear to his own army than they could be perceived by Rosecrans. Each side had an opportunity to seize the initiative, if

they could only see the enemy and react first. Rosecrans, if Bragg was in full retreat, could continue his race to cut off Bragg or at least cut the rail links to Atlanta. If Bragg paused, and Rosecrans learned it, the Federals could concentrate to destroy him. On the other hand, if Bragg found a piece of his enemy's army he could use the terrain to concentrate against it and defeat it piecemeal.

Bragg would have the opportunity for such an attack three times in the days to come. To take advantage of these opportunities would require subordinates who reacted quickly and took risk to achieve their mission. None of Bragg's subordinate commanders could manage this.

The first of these opportunities presented itself the evening of 9 September. With Crittenden moving slowly out of Chattanooga, one of Thomas' lead elements was at Steven's Gap, apparently moving to cross MacLemore's Cove and push toward Dug Gap. Bragg ordered General Hindman to attack this force. He was to move north from Lee and Gordon's Mill, Cross Pigeon Mountain at Worthen's Gap, and turn south toward Davis' Crossroads. There he would "unite with Cleburne's Division of Hills Corps, and attack a force of the enemy (thought to be 4,000 or 5,000 strong) 'at the foot of Lookout Mountain at Steven's Gap.'"[42] These orders required a large measure of initiative from both subordinate generals, and may have asked too much from a new commander.

Still, they were what was needed if Rosecrans was to be beaten in detail before concentrating his army.

In the event, Hindman made the march on the 10th into MacLemore's Cove, then stopped short of Davis' Cross-roads to wait until he knew that Hill's troops were on the move. Hill received his orders late, and immediately protested his inability to comply. Hill's delayed attack reinforced Hindman's caution. Even when reinforced in late afternoon by Buckner, Hindman did nothing more than secure his own line of retreat. Urgings and further orders from Bragg would not move Hindman. He moved slowly forward on the 11th but stopped when he ran into some Union cavalry pickets. A report in the afternoon giving the estimated enemy strength at 12,000 to 15,000 caused Hindman, Buckner, and Anderson to abandon their advance after a council of war. At the point of beginning the retreat, Hindman's scouts reported the Union troops retreating back through Steven's Gap. He then ordered a pursuit that was as ineffective as his advance had been.[43]

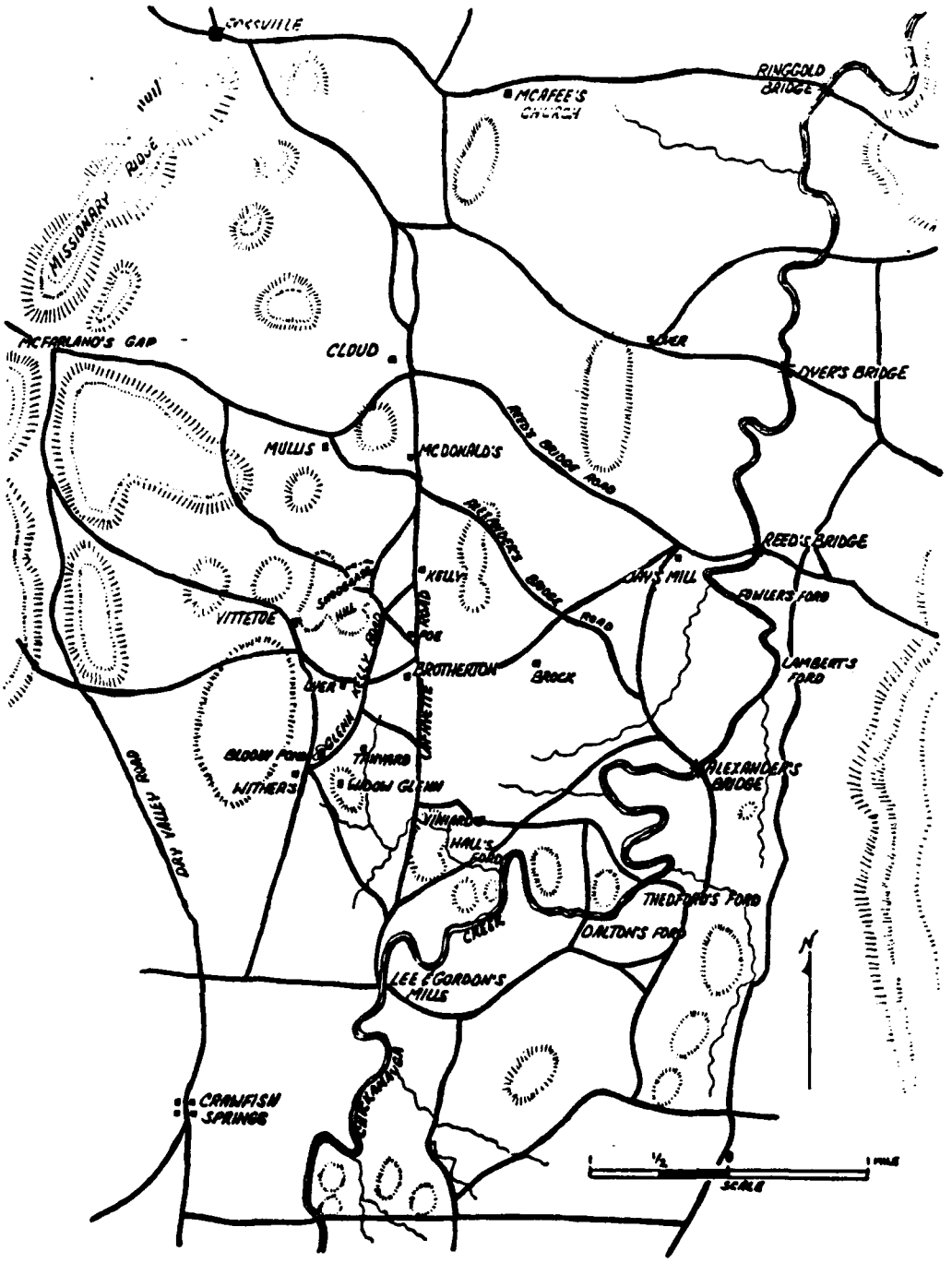
Unfortunately, this action set the pattern for the next two opportunities Bragg had to fight a piece of Rosecrans' force. These were further complicated by an inability to pin down the locations of Rosecrans' corps. On the night of 11/12 September, Bragg ordered Polk to move to Rock Spring. Bragg's intent was to attack an isolated division of Crittenden's corps along Pea Vine Road. Cheatham's

Division moved at 0930. Polk sent Hindman a message at 1330 to move "[s]o soon as your troops are supplied with three days rations and *are sufficiently refreshed.*"[44] What followed was a series of leisurely movements, quibbles over the meaning of vaguely worded orders, and disagreement over whether Federal units (and in what force) were there to be attacked. Bragg's attack, planned for first light on the 13th, was never made.

After this disappointment, Bragg made no attempt to capitalize on his third opportunity. Crittenden was concentrated on the Chickamauga Creek at Lee and Gordon's Mill. Bragg, with Polk's, Buckner's, and his reserve Corps, was only five miles away. Both McCook and Thomas were farther away. Thomas was no nearer than Steven's Gap, which was still being watched by Cleburne. McCook was still in the Alpine area -- thirty miles away. Bragg's action was to draw away from Crittenden, consolidating the army around La Fayette.[45]

Bragg's Army did not move from La Fayette until the 18th of September. By that time, his operational objective had changed. Instead of trying to isolate a corps of Rosecrans', he now attempted to bring on a general engagement by maneuvering to get astride the Union lines of communication. If successful, he would be between the Union army and Chattanooga (see Map 3). Rosecrans must then fight to regain Chattanooga, or withdraw across Lookout Mountain. When he

Map 3: The Chickamauga Battlefield



issued the order to move his army, Bragg believed the Union left to be Crittenden's XXI Corps at Lee and Gordon's Mill. Had he moved on the 17th as originally planned, his movement might have been deep enough to accomplish its purpose. He gave the following missions to his units:[46]

- Bushrod Johnson's provisional division (Johnson's Brigade, combined with those of Gregg and McNair from Mississippi) was to attack across Reed's Bridge, turn left (south) and attack upstream toward Lee and Gordon's. (Robertson's Brigade, from Hood's Division, moved with Johnson, under his command, on the 18th. Law's Brigade, also from Hood, was to follow, after eating their breakfast.)

- Walker's Reserve Corps was to attack across Alexander's Bridge, turn left with Johnson, and press toward Lee and Gordon's.

- Buckner was to cross at Thedford's Ford and join in the attack to the south.

- Polk was to attack west toward Lee and Gordon's, moving right to use Dalton's Ford if necessary. His attack would hold Crittenden.

- Hill's Corps was to be the left (south) flank unit. He was to guard against a Union movement from the south end of MacLemore's Cove, and attack into the flank of any Federal force reinforcing Crittenden at Lee and Gordon's.

- Wheeler's cavalry would cover the army's left and rear.

- Forrest received no mission in this order. He accompanied Johnson on the 18th with his cavalry.

If Crittenden's force at Lee and Gordon's Mills was indeed the Union left, this plan would put Bragg's army between Rosecrans and Chattanooga. It would not cut him off completely from the city, however. From Lee and Gordon's Mill, there were two ways out of the Chickamauga Valley. The direct route went north on the La Fayette Road to Rossville, and crossed Missionary Ridge through the Rossville Gap to Chattanooga. There was also a road to the west. This was the Dry Valley Road, about two and a half miles west of the La Fayette Road. It crossed Missionary Ridge through MacFarland's Gap not quite three miles short of Rossville. To block Rosecrans' exit, both the Rossville gap and MacFarland's Gap must be closed. In Bragg's orders, no unit had responsibility to close either gap.

It is not the purpose here to give a detailed account of the Battle of Chickamauga. Connelly's *Autumn of Glory* and Tucker's *Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West* give good accounts of the battle. Specific actions will be discussed in Chapter Four as they illustrate staff actions or errors. In general, the 18th of September was a day of movement for both armies. Rosecrans was bringing up both McCook's and Thomas' corps to concentrate at Lee and Gordon's, extending his left during the night of the 18th/19th. On the 18th, Bragg's northern units, Johnson's Division and

Walker's Corps, ran into unexpected difficulty with both the terrain and with Union units opposing their crossings. These were the only Confederate forces to cross Chickamauga Creek that day.

The 19th began as a day of piecemeal brigade attacks into the dense underbrush of the Chickamauga bottom land. A general order from Bragg for the day's attack might have prevented this, but none was issued. Due to Thomas' night march north, the day became for the Confederates one of feeling for the Federal left flank and never quite finding where it ended. Rosecrans, responding to the Confederate efforts, kept reinforcing Thomas. This allowed him to keep extending the left of the Union army. There was no coordinated Confederate attack made, either in the north, to roll up Thomas' flank; or in the center, where troops were siphoned off to send to Thomas. That night, Bragg completely reorganized his army, placing Polk in command of the Right Wing (Polk's, Hill's, and Walker's Corps) and Longstreet (not yet arrived when the reorganization took place) in command of the Left Wing (Buckner's and Longstreet's Corps, and Hindman's Division of Polk's Corps). A vague plan for an attack *en echelon* was given verbally to the wing commanders. Essentially, Polk was to attack first, and play hammer to Longstreet's anvil.[47]

The next day Polk's attack was both late and ineffective. Thomas' units had been able over the night to

throw up log breastworks that allowed him to contain Polk's attack. The attacks by Polk's divisions remained piecemeal and lacking coordination. In the south, opposite the Union center, Longstreet took the time to realign his divisions to allow for a massed attack. When delivered, this struck a gap in the Federal line, and ruptured it. The Union right, having been thinned to reinforce Thomas, could not contain Longstreet's attack and gave way. Longstreet, after pausing to reorganize his divisions, continued the attack to try to roll up Thomas' right. Bragg's plan had been reversed. Instead of a Left Wing anvil and Right Wing hammer, he now had a Left Wing hammer and Right Wing anvil. Despite a delaying action by Thomas, the Union army was driven from the field in disarray, and retreated all the way to Chattanooga.[48]

Bragg's victory was the most complete in the history of the Army of Tennessee. It was purchased at great cost after throwing away chances to fight Rosecrans' army in detail. It ultimately produced a siege around Chattanooga rather than securing east Tennessee and north Georgia. It set the stage for the loss of Atlanta instead in the recapture of east Tennessee. There are many reasons for these results. The remaining chapters will examine to what extent the army's staff might have contributed to or mitigated the campaign's outcome.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]R. Lockwood Tower, ed., a Carolinian Goes to War: The Civil War Narrative of Arthur Middleton Manigault (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1983), 103.

[2]Return of Casualties in the Union Forces engaged in the Middle Tennessee Campaign, June 23 - July 7, 1863; War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901) Series I, Volume XXIII, Part 1, 424. Hereafter cited as O.R. Further references are to Series I unless otherwise noted.

[3]Abstracts from Returns of Department No. 2, for June 20 and July 10, 1863; O.R., XXIII, Pt. 1: 585-86.

[4]Seddon to Bragg, 14 July 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 908-909.

[5]Withers was relieved on 22 July, and sent to Alabama to train conscripts in Special Orders No. 194, Hqtrs, Army of Tennessee; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 925. Hindman's appointment was announced in Special Orders No. 216, Hqtrs, Army of Tennessee, 13 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4, 495.

[6]Deshler's new assignment was announced in the same orders appointing Hindman; O. R., XXX, Pt. 4: 495.

[7]Oladowski to Wright, 13 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 494-495.

[8]Cooper to Bragg, 22 July 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 924.

[9]Special Orders No. 176, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, 25 July 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 931.

[10]Abstract from return of the Dept. of Tennessee, 20 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 518-519.

[11]Data taken from abstracts from the field returns of the Dept. of East Tennessee for 31 July and 10 August 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 945, 962.

[12]Organization of the Army of East Tennessee, 31 July 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 945-46.

[13]Abstract from return of the Dept. of Mississippi and East Louisiana, 20 August 1863; O. R., XXX, Pt. 4: 518.

[14]Seddon to Hardee, 29 July 1863; and Johnston to Seddon, 30 July 1863: O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 936.

[15]Cooper to Bragg, 1 August 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 948.

[16]Bragg to Cooper, 5 August 1863; O. R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 952.

[17]Bragg to Johnston, 21 August 1863; Johnston to Cooper and Cooper to Johnston, both 22 August 1863: O. R., XXX, Pt. 4: 529.

[18]Johnston to Bragg, 24 August 1863; O. R., XXX, Pt. 4, 541.

[19]William G. Piston, Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant: James Longstreet and his Image in American Society (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 269.

[20]James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox (check again publisher's data), 433-34.

[21]Longstreet to Lee, 5 September 1863; O.R., XXIX, Pt. 2, 699.

[22]Lee to President Davis, 6 September 1863; O.R., XXIX, Pt. 2: 700-701. Also, Lee to Davis, 14 September 1863; Ibid., 719-20.

[23]Lee to President Davis, 9 September 1863; O.R., XXIX, Pt. 2: 706.

[24]Thomas L. Connelly, Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 150-52.

[25]Connelly, 162-63.

[26]All data from O.R., XXIII, Pt. 2. The 10 June figures are from the Abstract from Return of the Army of Tennessee, on page 873. The 20 July numbers are from the Abstract from Return of the Troops in Dept. No. 2, on pages 919-20. The 10 August numbers are from the Abstract from Return of the Troops in the Dept. of Tennessee, on page 957.

[27]Special Order No. 179, Hqtrs Army of Tennessee, 7 July 1963; O.R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 902.

[28]Special Orders No. 184, Hqtrs, Army of Tennessee, 12 July 1863, with indorsement, O.R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 907. Anderson to Major Thomas M. Jack, 15 July 1863, Ibid., 911.

[29]Nocquet to J. E. Johnston, 26 January 1863; O.R., LII, Pt. 2: 417.

[30]Anderson to Major Jack, 21 July 1863; O.R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 923.

[31]All data from O.R., XXX, Pt. 4. Hindman to Lieut. Col. Jack, 21 August 1863; pages 523-24. Anderson to Jack, 21 August 1863; page 525. Hindman to Jack, 21 August 1863, 5 P.M.; page 525.

[32]Buckner to Cooper, 21 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 526.

[33]Mackall to Hill, 22 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 531.

[34]All messages are for 21 August 1863 and are from O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: Adams to Wood, 531; Hill to Stewart, 532; Stewart to Brown and Stewart to Bate, both 535; Clayton to Hatcher, 532-33; Clayton to Anderson, 533-34.

[35]Buckner to Mackall, 23 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 540.

[36]Bragg to Buckner, 23 August 1863; O.R., XX, Pt. 4: 532-33.

[37]Connelly, 168.

[38]Mauldin to Wheeler, 31 August 11 P.M.; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 574.

[39]George Wm. Brent to Polk, 1 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 579. Kinloch Falconer through Capt. Foster to Wheeler, 1 September 1863; Ibid., 580.

[40]Bragg to Seddon, 2 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 584-85.

[41]Connelly, 173.

[42]Report of Major General Hindman, commanding division, 22 October 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2:292.

[43]Ibid., 292-302. Connelly, 175-185 also provides a good account of this episode.

[44]Bragg to Polk, 12 September 1863, 6:00 P.M.; O.R., XXX. Pt. 2: 30. Jack to Cheatham, 12 September 1863, 3:15 A.M., and Jack to Hindman, 12 September 1863, 1:30 P.M.; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4:640-41. Emphasis added.

[45]Bragg's after action report on the campaign does not mention this consolidation at La Fayette. But the reports of Hill and Polk clearly indicate that they moved from La Fayette on the 18th of September, and imply that the rest of the army corps were there as well from the 13th/14th until the 18th. The respective references are: Report of Lieut Gen Daniel H. Hill, C.S. Army, commanding corps, O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 139; and Reports of Lieut Gen Leonidas Polk, C.S. Army, commanding Right Wing, Ibid., 45.

[46]Circular orders, Hqtrs Army of Tennessee, 18 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 31.

[47]In the O.R., XXX, Pt. 2, see the after action reports of Hill (pages 140-43), Longstreet (pages 287-89), and Polk (page 47, 52-54, 61-64) for the reorganization and the confusion and delay that it caused.

[48]Tucker, 218-375, and Connelly, 216-229, give complete accounts of the battle on the 20th.

# CHAPTER TWO

## STAFF ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

### PART I: ANTECEDENTS IN THE U.S. ARMY

> "In fact, no part of our military organization requires more attention in peace than the general staff. It is in every service invariably the last in attaining perfection; and if neglected in peace, when there is leisure, it will be impossible, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of war to bring it to perfection."[1]
>
> Ingersoll

When the Confederate States formed their Army, they naturally used as a model the army with which they were most familiar: the United States Army. In appropriating an organization for their army, they also took the Federal staff system and War Department organization. The new government adopted virtually unchanged the organization and regulations of the U.S. Army in organizing their own.[2]

Confederate President Jefferson Davis graduated from West Point, as had most of those destined to serve as senior commanders in the Confederate army. Together they served in the Mexican War, gaining experience in larger military organizations. As they formed the Confederate States Army

(CSA), they would draw on a shared knowledge of military organization. This knowledge was of two kinds. First, a common education in the organization of military units and staffs. Second, a shared experience of how the United States organized and governed its own military establishment.

In pre-war America, the writings of Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini formed the theoretical foundation for the military art.[3] Jomini summarized his interpretation of Napoleonic warfare in his Precis de l'Art de la Guerre. As interpreted for them by Dennis Hart Mahan, Jomini's systematic principles of warfare became the basis for West Point cadets' study of military theory and strategy.[4] Jomini also addressed in broad terms the functions of a military staff, without allocating those functions to specific officers.[5] This French theorist strongly influenced the U.S. Army during the antebellum period, both in its approach to tactical and strategic issues and its organization.

Besides a common educational foundation, there was a shared experience base in the pre-war Army that President Davis and his senior officers drew on in forming the CSA. This practical application of military theory to the American context would profoundly affect the organization of the Confederate War Department, the units and organization of the CSA, and the nature, organization, and relationships of staffs in the field armies.

The heritage of civilian control over the military that the Confederacy inherited from the United States was a quarrelsome one. From the 1820s to the start of the Civil War, the relations between the Secretary of War, the Commanding General, and the Staff Bureaus in the War Department were often acrimonious. At heart was a dichotomy in the chain of command. The Secretary of War was the titular head of the Army, which was a part of the War Department. However, he was not formally in the chain of command of the field forces. This ran from the local commander, through the Commanding General, to the President. In Washington were permanent staff bureaus, intended to advise and assist the Secretary of War.[6] Naturally, they looked to the Secretary as their proper superior. However, as military officers the bureau staff also belonged to an Army hierarchy. The Commanding General believed that they were therefore subject to his orders and supervision.

John C. Calhoun (Secretary of War from 1817-1825) envisioned a tripartite division of the War Department. The Secretary was to be the President's agent, executing the military policies of the nation. Permanent staff bureaus would supervise the administration of the Army. The senior general officer was to be the Commanding General and command the Army.[7] Calhoun intended a rotation for officers between line and staff duties. Congress however, failed to authorize supernumerary officers above the authorizations of

the line regiments, aides to general officers, and bureau staff. Because of this parsimony, supernumerary officers were not available to allow Calhoun's rotation of officers. Thus officers appointed to staff bureaus remained in them. In addition, there was no provision for retiring an officer. As a result, there was little turnover in the heads of the staff bureaus or the Army's senior leadership in the decades before the war. From 1825-1860 there were only two adjutants general, two inspectors general, two quartermasters general, and one commissary general.[8]

This continuity of personnel and the long tenure of the chiefs of the staff bureaus created a continuity of interest within the bureaus. Too often, however, the interests of the bureaus were in increasing their own power and roles within the War Department. In the disputes between the Secretary of War and the Commanding General, the bureaus were pulled in two different directions. This allowed them to build their own base of power in what was often a three-way struggle.

The Army did not need to create the tension between the Secretary, the staff bureaus, and the Commanding General to create a rivalry between staff and line officers. It would certainly have developed on its own, as it has in most armies since the need for significant staffs arose. Most line officers would have resisted Secretary Calhoun's scheme of alternate tours of duty with the Army staff; especially

in an army accustomed to the independent posting of small units. Braxton Bragg's views about staff officers may be extreme, but not atypical. In the Southern Literary Messenger, he attacked staff officers as "ignorant and useless officers," only "proficient in the art of pleasing in high places."[9] Still, Bragg accepted the need for rotation between line and staff as proposed by Secretary Calhoun. In addition, he proposed the uniting of all the different staff departments under one chief of staff.[10] This was a radical proposal for the U.S. Army of the day, one that could have placed it on an equal footing with the most advanced European armies. It was too much for the contemporary Army. An integrated staff would have to wait for 1903 and Elihu Root.

Jefferson Davis, as Secretary of War from 1853-1857, was embroiled in his share of disputes with the Commanding General, Winfield Scott. In essence these were over which man would control the Army. Davis won, establishing his authority over the line of the Army, as well as the War Department and the staff bureaus.[11] In the process he created a system of dual control that will be discussed more fully in the context of the CSA.

Davis also addressed the relationship between line and staff officers. He opposed what was by now a permanent staff corps, which denied ". . . to officers of the staff that knowledge which can only be acquired by the performance of company and regimental duty."[12] Davis' argument was two-

fold. First, the existing system produced staff officers who often reached high rank, but had limited experience. These officers were likely to make reasonable decisions in the administration of their departmental areas that would prove unworkable in the field. Second, officers were at times appointed to the staff departments without regard for their aptitude. A permanent staff corps failed to allow for the correction of personnel mistakes. Davis was arguing for a scheme of rotation between line and staff. This integration of both groups of officers through common experiences, would create an officer corps of greater breadth of experience. In addition it would better identify officers for service in advanced rank in either line command or staff bureau.

Like Calhoun, Jefferson Davis was unsuccessful in his attempt to establish a rotation between staff and line in the antebellum Army. When called upon to supervise the establishment of the Confederate Army, he was uniquely qualified. He had a professional military education, active service with both regular and volunteer troops, and an intimate knowledge of how to make a War Department work. In all likelihood, he would have preferred to include some of his reforms in the new CSA establishment. Still, when speed is important in the establishment of an army, drawing on a common base of knowledge is vital. In 1861, the Confederacy chose the speed that expediency lent in forming their Army.

In adopting (instead of adapting) the form and substance of the U.S. Army for their needs, the new nation took a system that reflected more than thirty years of Departmental power politics.

Just how this system worked is best seen in an 1861 military dictionary. Colonel Henry Lee Scott was General Winfield Scott's son-in-law and aide-de-camp. Not surprisingly, his book reflected the Commanding General's views of disputed issues, and was therefore controversial. The Military Dictionary still became a standard Civil War reference. William P. Craighill, author of The Army Officer's Pocket Companion: Principally Designed for Staff Officers in the Field, borrowed from it extensively. It provides insight to the state of military practice in 1861.

In Colonel Scott's view, the administration of the Army was distinct from command. Administration was the execution of military law, and was ". . . controlled by the head of an executive department of the government, under the orders of the President . . . . ."[13] It was therefore the purview of the Secretary of War and the permanent staff bureaus. Command was the " . . . discipline, military control, and direction of military service of officers and soldiers . . . legally exercised only by the military hierarchy . . . . ."[14] Both the staff bureaus, in their administrative role, and the Commanding General, in the exercise of his command, gave directions to subordinate commanders.

This system embodied the dual control that was the outcome of years of dispute between Secretary of War and Commanding General. Ironically, both Winfield Scott and Jefferson Davis detested this dual control and wanted a clear single chain of command. Unfortunately, each would have excluded the other from that chain.

Colonel Scott distinguished three staff elements:

> 1. The General Staff, consisting of adjutants-general and assistant adjutants-general; aides-de-camp; inspectors-general and assistant inspectors-general. The functions of these officers consist not merely in distributing the orders of commanding generals, but also in regulating camps, directing the march of columns, and furnishing to the commanding general all necessary details for the exercise of his authority. Their duties embrace the whole range of the service of the troops, and they are hence properly styled general staff-officers.
>
> 2. Staff Corps, or staff departments. These are special corps or departments, whose duties are confined to distinct branches of the service. The engineer corps and topographical engineers are such staff corps. The ordnance, quartermasters', subsistence, medical, and pay departments are such staff departments.
>
> 3. The Regimental Staff embraces regimental officers and non-commissioned officers charged with functions, within their respective regiments, assimilated to the duties of adjutants-general, quartermasters, and commissaries. Each regiment has a regimental adjutant and a regimental quartermaster, appointed by the Colonel from the officers of the regiment.[15]

It is clear from the definition above that Colonel Scott believed that a general staff officer must be an

officer of broad experience. Only such experience could produce an officer who could

> ". . . second his general by aiding him intelligently . . . [and] stimulate and enlighten the troops by his interpretation of the orders he carries, by his intuitive knowledge of their tactical position, by his *coup d'oeil*, by the propriety of his counsels, and by the vigor of his impulsions."[16]

These are qualities that can only come from regimental experience. Colonel Scott unintentionally supported Jefferson Davis' argument. Rotation between staff and line is necessary to develop competent staff officers.

In the Dictionary's distinction of staff elements, the outlines of modern staff division are present. The general staff served as an operations staff: preparing and transmitting orders, supervising their execution, and gathering information on the state of his own command and that of the enemy. The staff corps functioned as combat support staff elements: providing technical expertise to the general staff, and supervising the specialist units of their corps. The staff departments made up a logistics staff, less the personnel function retained by the adjutant-general. Personal staff officers (chaplains, judge-advocates, surgeons) served commanders of units of regimental and larger size.

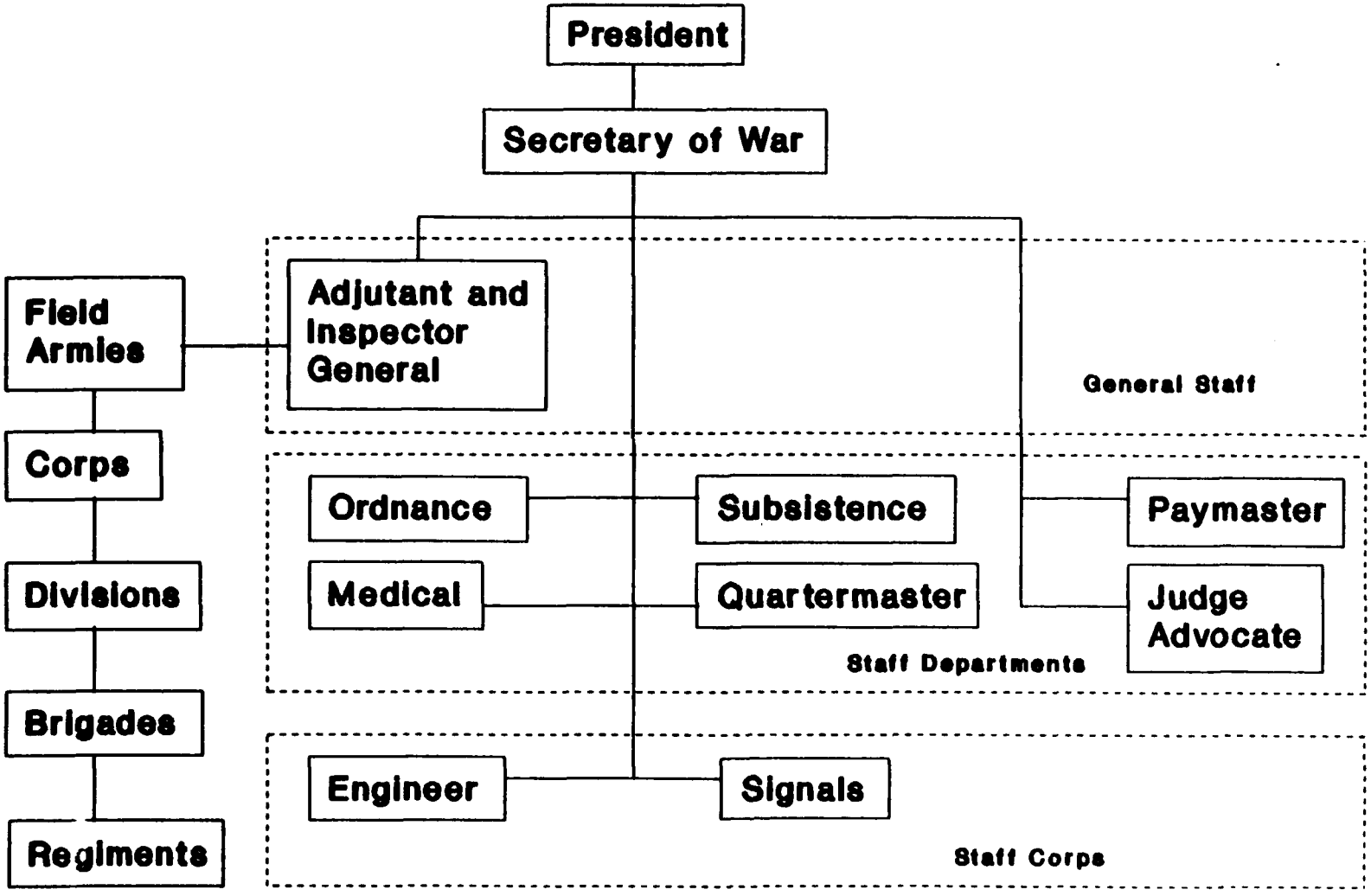
## PART II: THE CONFEDERATE STAFF SYSTEM

In examining the organization of the Confederate War Department and Army, I will use Colonel Scott's terms for the various staff elements outline above. To distinguish further between Federal and Confederate organizations, I will use the term 'department' in referring to the Confederate Army's permanent staff bureaus. Figure 1 shows the organization of the Confederate War Department and the CSA.

The primary staff department in the Confederate system was the Adjutant and Inspector General Department. It had responsibility for the administration of the Army. The Confederate Congress established the department in the spring of 1861. It combined the duties of the Adjutant-General with those of the Inspector-General.[17] This combination of duties was mirrored at all levels in the CSA. An Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) with the field forces was expected to carry out administrative and inspection duties.[18]

In establishing this department, and in selecting the man to head it, Jefferson Davis attempted to avoid the dispute between a CSA Commanding General and the War Department's permanent staff departments. He did this by two

## Fig. 1: Confederate Army Organization



means. First, there was no CSA Commanding General appointed. President Davis retained his authority to act as Commander in Chief, through the Secretary of War and the Adjutant and Inspector General Department. The latter functioned in part as the President's private secretariat for military affairs. This system could perhaps have worked had Jefferson Davis found a Secretary of War capable of assisting him in three areas: Army administration, strategic analysis and decision making, and the exercise of command. Unhappily, no Confederate Secretary of War could fill all these roles.[19]

Second, Davis appointed as the Adjutant and Inspector General the senior general officer in the CSA. This was Samuel Cooper, who had been for the previous nine years the Adjutant General of the U. S. Army. There was therefore no basis for field commanders to contest the authority of General Cooper. Lack of a basis did not, of course, stop such contention. Joseph E. Johnston argued forcefully that Cooper was not properly the senior Confederate General.[20]

Except for the combined Adjutant and Inspector General Department, the staff departments of the Confederate War Department mirrored those of the United States. The Quartermaster Department was responsible for the equipment of the CSA. It was also responsible for the transportation of individuals, units, equipment, and supplies. The Subsistence Department was responsible for the acquisition of

foodstuffs and fodder for the CSA. It ensured (in theory) that each man received the proper ration. The Ordnance Department acquired and furnished to the Army the weapons, cartridges, powder, ball and shell, and gun carriages required. Both the Quartermasters and the Ordnance officers were to take responsibility for captured equipment and arms. The Medical Department provided health services to the Army. It provided the surgeons and their assistants that served with the field units, and staffed and supervised the hospitals established for the long term care of the seriously wounded or sick.

The two staff corps, the Corps of Engineers and the Signal Corps, functioned as did their Union counterparts. Engineers supervised the layout of camps and preparation of fortifications, as well as the building or repairing of bridges and railroads. The Signals personnel installed, operated, and maintained the telegraphic communications system; often with the help of the civilian owners and telegraphists.

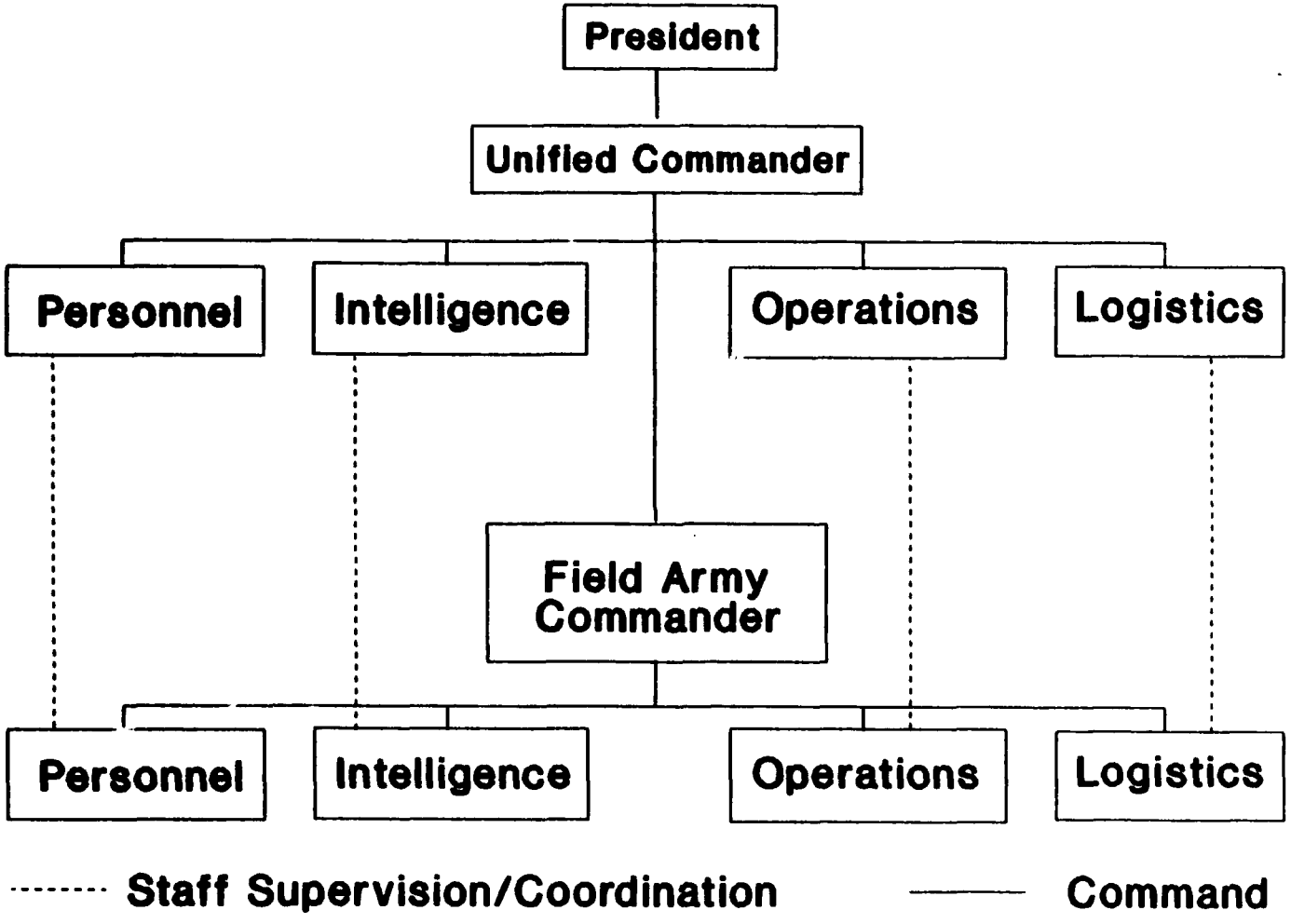
A modern commander normally organizes his staff along functional lines into four departments: Personnel, Intelligence, Operations, and Logistics. Intelligence and operations staff personnel make up the operations staff. The personnel and logistics staffs together form the combat service support (CSS) staff. Specialized or technical corps such as engineers, signals, or military police provide

combat support staff personnel, and support either the operations or CSS staffs.

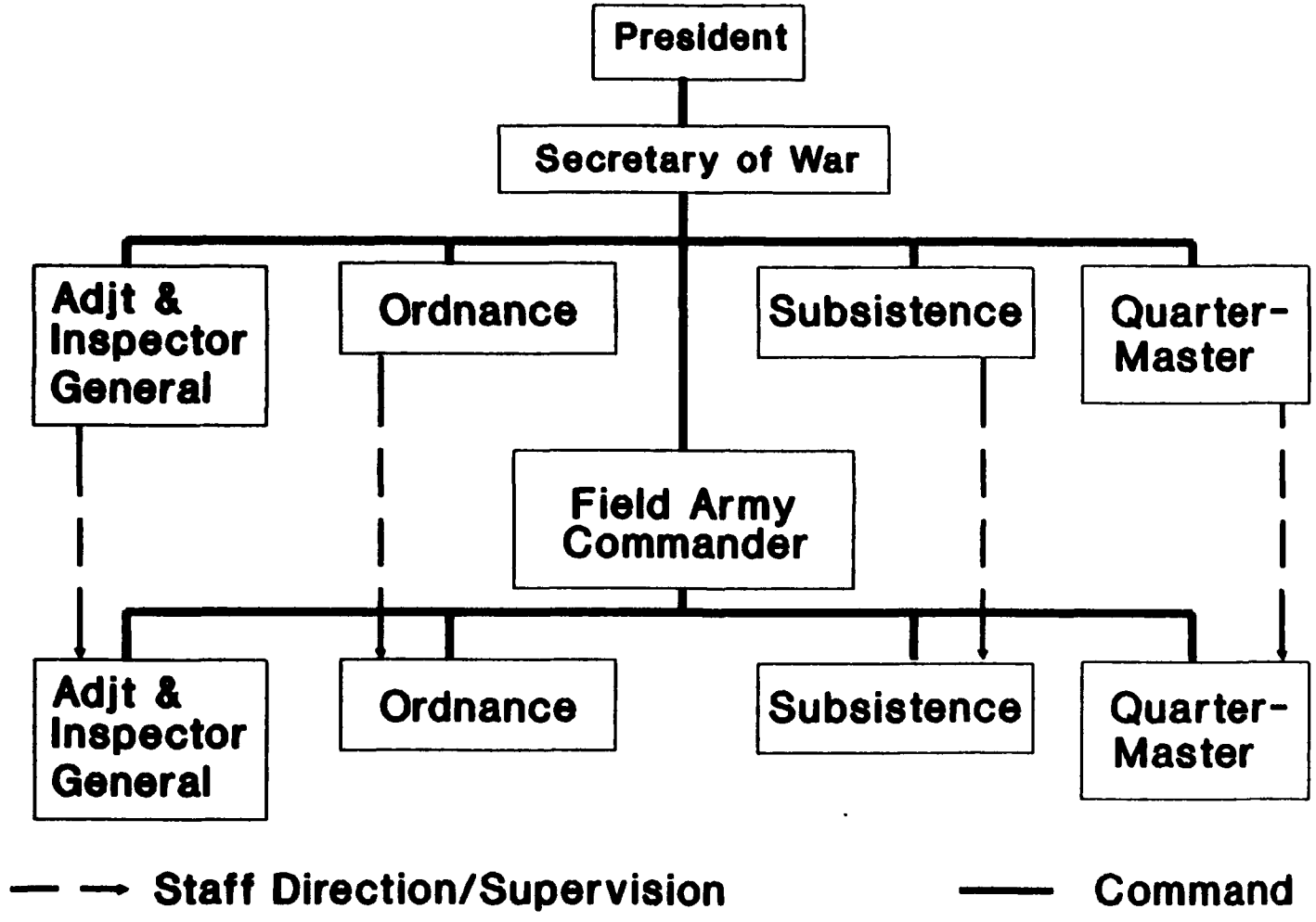
Looking at the Confederate staff system, the Quartermaster, Subsistence, Medical, and Ordnance departments served as a logistics staff. The Adjutant and Inspector General Department, in its personnel function, did also. Where this department was involved in the preparation of orders, or in inspections, it functions as the equivalent of an operations staff. The Engineer and Signals personnel served as combat support staff officers. What was missing was any trace of an intelligence staff element. This lack, shared by both Union and Confederate armies, would affect both during this campaign.

A modern command and control system built around a military staff has a defined set of relationships. These are shown at Figure 2. A commander exercises command over his staff and subordinate commanders. His staff conducts staff coordination with subordinate commanders, their staffs, or the staff of the next higher commander. This coordination may take the form of information updates, warning orders, requests for information (or the responses to such requests). It is not directive in nature. Directives come from commanders. This is why orders are approved by commanders, even when they may actually be issued in his name by a staff officer.

## Fig. 2: Modern Command and Staff Relationships



## Fig. 3: Confederate Army Dual Control System



In the Confederate system, there is a dual control apparatus established. Figure 3 shows this relationship. Staff officers at one level give directives and orders to their counterparts in subordinate units. Lieutenant Colonel William K. Beard, Assistant Inspector General to General Bragg, shows this system in the organization of the Inspector General's Department within the Army of Tennessee. He set up a departmental structure with its own hierarchy, holding corps inspectors responsible for those in subordinate units. There was a rigid reporting chain from Brigade Inspectors through the division and corps inspectors to the Inspector General of the Army of Tennessee. Lieut. Col. Beard's departmental organization was functioning at army level as President Davis intended his War Department staff departments to function throughout the CSA. In this role Lieut. Col. Beard exercised considerable independence, acting within the regulations governing inspectors.[21]

Lieutenant Colonel Beard also showed considerable independence in taking corrective action to correct organizational or compliance weaknesses.

> "In dealing with these weaknesses Beard acted on his own authority. In the four months from May to September, 1863, there were only three cases of referral to a higher authority, twice to Bragg, concerning civilian complaints, and once to Mackall. On all other occasions, Beard was apparently competent to handle matters himself, and there is no sign of intervention by Bragg. Beard worked directly with his department at all command levels, giving orders through a descending hierarchy of . . .

> inspectors, and receiving reports in the ascending line; he also communicated with other staff departments and with subordinate line commanders, requiring correction of the deficiencies reported by the inspectors."[22]

Except that this was the action of an independent Inspector General's department, to which he was opposed, President Davis could have used Lieut. Col. Beard's operation as the model for staff operations in the CSA.

The dual control system of the Confederacy seldom worked as in the example above. It frequently resulted in conflicting guidance and directives passed along its multiple channels. At other times, chiefs of staff departments were not sufficiently effective in exercising their authority (within departmental areas) over subordinate units. To make it work required tremendous effort at each level of command. The one mechanism that might have alleviated some of these deficiencies was the appointment of a Chief of Staff. Neither side in the Civil War started with such a position. In the Confederacy, without a Commanding General for much of the war, Adjutant-General Cooper's position seems intended for this role. His chosen focus on administrative matters never allowed him to develop into a true chief of staff. By 1863, both of the armies in the Chickamauga campaign had evolved a chief of staff. In the Army of Tennessee, his role varied as either the commander or chief of staff changed.

## PART III: THE CHIEF OF STAFF

Adjutant-General Cooper in Richmond had the personnel resources to handle the load of administrative, inspection, and legal duties that were the purview of his department. Field armies and their subordinate organizations did not. Administrative and other staff officers were always limited by regulation, depending on the level of organization. While field units often ignored regulatory limits, there were always the limits imposed by the lack of qualified officers or by attrition.

Table 4 outlines the organization of the staff of the Army of Tennessee. As noted above, the principal innovation was the inclusion of a chief of staff. Brigadier General William Whann Mackall was General Bragg's third chief of staff,[23] appointed on 17 April 1863.[24] The duties of a chief of staff had no doctrinal foundation in the CSA at this time. Certainly Bragg had used his two previous Chiefs of Staff as a sort of supernumerary Adjutants General.[25] The proper role of a chief of staff would not be resolved during the war by either of the contending armies. It would always be dependent on the personalities of the commander and his appointed chief.

Table 4: Staff Personnel, Army of Tennessee[26]

**Chief of Staff**

Brig Gen William W. Mackall

**Adjutant General Dept**

Lt Col George W. Brent
Maj Kinloch Falconer
Capt Giles B. Cooke
Capt Lemuel Conner

**Inspector General Dept**

Lt Col William K. Beard
Lt Col A. J. Hays
Maj Pollack B. Lee
Maj William Clare
Capt P. H. Thomson
Capt James Cooper
Capt G. W. Carr

**Quartermaster Dept**

Maj M. B. McMicken
Maj Albert J Smith
Capt John W. Green
Capt N. H. Forbes

**Subsistence Dept**

Maj Giles M. Hillyer
Maj William H. Ross
Capt Darling

**Signals**

Capt Edward H. Cummins

**Provost Marshal**

Col Alexander McKinstry
Capt William A. Reid
Capt Charles H. Peden**

**Escort Cmdr**

Capt Guy Dreux

**Aides-de-Camp**

Col Joseph P. Jones
Lieut William M. Bridges
Lieut F. S. Parker, Jr.
Lieut T. B. Mackall
Lieut Towson Ellis

**Volunteer Aides**

Isham G. Harris*
Col M. L. Clark
Col Taylor Beatty
Lt Col David Urquhart
Maj J. Stoddard Johnston
Maj John M. Huger

**Ordnance Dept**

Lt Col Hypolite Oladowski
Capt O. T. Gibbes
Capt W. H. Warren**
Capt W. D. Humphries
Capt George Little
Lieut R. F. Nichol

**Artillery**

Lt Col James H. Hallonquist
Lieut R. H. Smith Thompson

**Engineer**

Capt Stephen W. Presstman
Lieut A. H. Buchanan

**Surgeon**

E. A. Flewellen
Samuel H. Stout
T. G. Richardson

**Paymaster Dept**

Maj Albert J. Smith

Notes: * Governor of Tennessee
** Transferred 12 September to Atlanta

When first appointed, General Mackall played a different role than did his predecessors. He was much more involved in supervising the entire staff, and was Bragg's channel to his subordinate commanders. He was involved in operational decisions, issued orders to corps commanders, and attended commanders conferences. He functioned as a modern chief of staff.[27] In using Mackall in this fashion, Bragg was in accord with Jomini and the most advanced European command systems.

In late July of 1863, Lieut. Col. George W. Brent returned to the army and resumed his former position as Assistant Adjutant General. From that time on, Bragg used either man indiscriminately for the transmission of orders. The distinction between the offices of adjutant general and chief of staff ended. Mackall became what Bragg's previous chiefs of staff had been - an adjunct adjutant. In October he asked to be relieved.[28]

For three months, General Bragg and the Army of Tennessee had a functional chief of staff. Mackall's departure certainly stemmed from his disagreement with Bragg on the nature of their relationship. Bragg failed to take advantage of the improved command and control that Mackall's new role made possible. This may have cost his army dearly in the Battle of Chickamauga, especially in the night hours of 19 September, as orders and plans went awry.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]L. D. Ingersoll, A History of the War Department of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Francis B. Mohun, 1879), 91.

[2]Constitution for the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America, 8 February 1861; O.R., Series IV, vol I: 92-99. An Act for the Establishment and Organization of a General Staff for the Army of the Confederate States of America, 26 February 1861; Ibid., 114-115. An Act for the Establishment and Organization of the Army of the Confederate States of America, 6 March 1861; Ibid., 127-31.

[3]John Shy, "Jomini", in Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age, Peter Paret, ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 143-185, presents an excellent summary of Jomini's work and its impact.

[4]Russell F. Weigley, An American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 83-84.

[5]Jomini, 232-240.

[6]Ingersoll, War Department, 26, 93, 105, 106.

[7]Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967), 134-35.

[8]Corbin and Thian, Legislative History, 52, 86, 140, 238.

[9]A Subaltern, "Notes on Our Army," Southern Literary Messenger, vol X (1844), 247, 251. Quoted in June I. Gow, Military Administration in the Confederacy: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1864 (Ph.D. dis., University of British Colombia, 1970), 17. Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat: Volume I, Field Command (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 35-36, identifies the author as Bragg.

[10]Grady McWhinney, Bragg, 37.

[11]Weigley, Army History, 194.

[12]Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist. His Letters, Papers, and Speeches (10 vols.; Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923) vol III, 77, quoted in June I. Gow, Military Administration, 21.

[13]Henry L. Scott, Military Dictionary (New York: Van Nostrand, 1861), 16.

[14]Ibid., 17.

[15]Ibid., 570-71.

[16]Ibid., 572.

[17]In addition the Adjutant General was responsible for the functioning of military law. The Judge Advocate personnel therefore were part of this department.

[18]See note 2. Also, An Act amendatory of an Act for the Organization of the Staff Departments of the Army and an Act for the establishment and Organization of the Army of the Confederate States of America, 14 March 1861; O.R., Series IV, vol I: 163-64. Report of Mr. Waul from the Committee to Examine into the Quartermaster's, Commissary, and Medical Departments, 29 January 1862; Ibid.: 883-91.

[19]Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 107-108.

[20]Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations During the Civil War (New York: D. Appleton, 1874; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1959), 70-73.

[21]June I. Gow, Military Administration, 169-72.

[22]Ibid., 173.

[23]Although Bragg appointed his Asst. Adjutant General, Lieut. Col. George W. Brent, as his principal staff officer from 2 October-20 November 1862, there is no reason to believe his role was significantly expanded beyond the administrative duties he was already performing.

[24]General Orders No. 9, Hqtrs Department No. 2, 17 April 1863; O.R., vol XXIII, Part 2: 777.

[25]Gow, Military Administration, 44-50.

[26]Sources for this list include: Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Non-regimental Enlisted Men, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, Microfilm Publication 331, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as CSR); Reports of General Braxton Bragg, C. S. Army, commanding Army of Tennessee, O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 21-40; correspondence in the O.R., XXX and LII; and data compiled by Dr. William Glenn Robertson, in the files of the Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC.

[27]Gow, Military Administration, 54-55.

[28]Ibid., 56-58.

## CHAPTER THREE

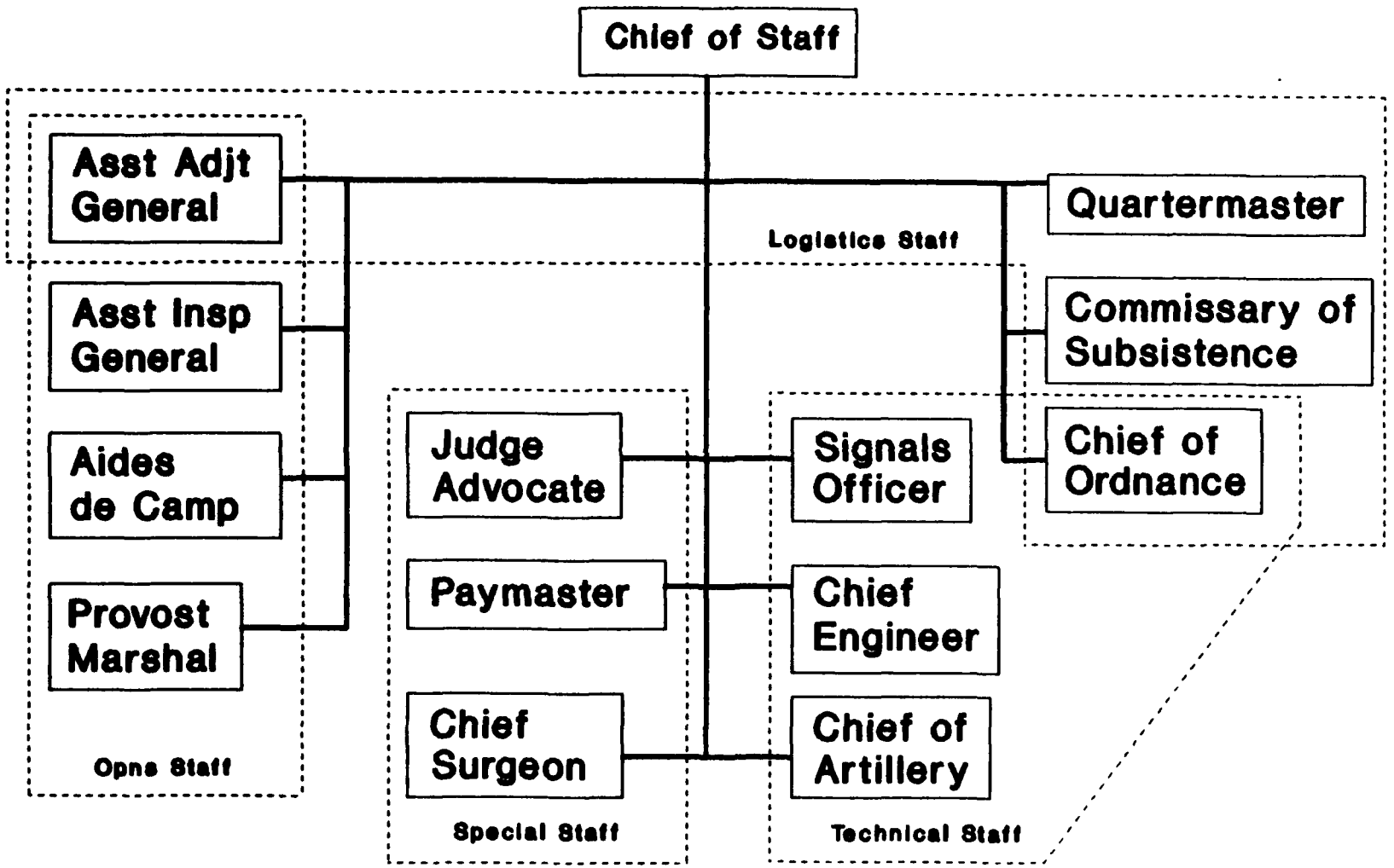
## THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE STAFF

### PART I: FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

> "The responsibilities of command, apart from the obvious and often by no means trivial job of looking after itself, are commonly divided into two parts. First, command must arrange and coordinate everything an army needs to exist -- its food supply, its sanitary service, its system of military justice, and so on. Second, command enables the army to carry out its proper mission, which is to inflict the maximum amount of death and destruction on the enemy within the shortest possible period of time and at minimum loss to itself; to this part of command belong, for example, the gathering of intelligence and the planning and monitoring of operations. [These] two are mutually dependent and by no means entirely distinct . . . ."[1]
>
> Van Creveld

The staff of the Army of Tennessee mirrored the CSA Staff Departments in its formal organization. In its functional organization, it was divided into four groups (Figure 4). The following discussion examines these groups in terms of a modern division of functions, noting differences as they are found. It is important to remember that Bragg's staff itself might not have made these distinctions. Still, the actual functioning of the army staff fits the model reasonably well.

## Fig. 4: The Army of Tennessee Staff



The first of these groups was the operations staff. In a modern staff, this would include the operations and intelligence staff officers, augmented by special and technical staff personnel as required. In the Army of Tennessee, this group included the Assistant Adjutant General, the Assistant Inspector General, the Provost Marshal, and the commanding general's Aides-de-Camp (both those permanently assigned and those who volunteered their services on a temporary basis).

This staff was responsible for helping their commander 'see the battlefield.' They collected, analyzed, and presented him with information on the strengths and weaknesses of his own forces, how they were deployed, and the extent of their training and morale. General Bragg's Provost Marshal, Colonel Alex McKinstry, was responsible for enforcement of law and CSA regulations within the command. He also ran the army's intelligence service. His responsibility in this role was to keep Bragg informed on the strengths, locations, movements, and intentions of the opposing Federal forces.

The Assistant Adjutant General, Lieutenant Colonel George W. Brent, was responsible for Bragg's correspondence, preparing and issuing orders in his name as directed. As noted in Chapter 2, he was the conduit for both administrative and operational orders from General Bragg to his subordinate commanders. In this role, his people were assisted

by one or more of the aides if necessary. Transmitting the orders or messages was done by telegraphy if sent to a distant recipient located near a telegraph office. If not, it was sent through the mails. For a subordinate commander, the mode of transmission would likely be by messenger. The courier would often be an aide, especially if the situation was likely to require modification of the guidance contained in the message. However it was often entrusted to an enlisted member of Bragg's escort, especially if circumstances dictated the sending of multiple copies to the same recipient.

Aides performed another important service. Together with the Assistant Inspector General, Lieutenant Colonel William K. Beard, and the officers of his department they were General Bragg's 'directed telescope.' Reporting only to the commander, they gave him focused information on the terrain, the enemy, or his own army; information that was not distorted by being passed through the filters of intervening subordinate headquarters. In an age of large armies and before wireless communications, their ability to monitor the actions of subordinate commanders and units was potentially invaluable to the army commander.

The second major staff division was the logistics staff or, in modern terms, the combat service support (CSS) staff. A modern CSS staff would be concerned with manning, arming, fixing, fueling, protecting, and transporting the

army. It would have supply, field services, maintenance, personnel, finance, medical, and transportation staff officers, augmented by special and technical staff personnel as needed. In the Army of Tennessee, the core of the logistics staff included the Assistant Quartermaster, the Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, and the Chief of Ordnance. In addition, the Assistant Adjutant General had a personnel administration function. He was responsible for personnel accounting, strength reporting, and replacement personnel operations. Unlike the Union army, the Confederacy sent individual replacements to its regiments.

The Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, Major Giles M. Hillyer, was responsible for feeding the army. He procured, stored, and issued both the soldiers' daily ration and forage for the quartermaster's horses. Confederate policy required cavalrymen, in addition to providing their own mounts, to furnish their own rations and forage as well.[2] Officers were furnished forage or submitted claims for reimbursement. To meet his requirements, the Quartermaster had to establish depots and monitor the ability of the areas set aside by the Confederate government to feed the army. In the Confederate support system, each of the armies drew from a specific geographic area. The Army of Tennessee was usually supported with food from Tennessee, western North Carolina, and northern Alabama and Mississippi. The successive losses of portions of this area to Union

forces or due to the creation of Johnston's Department of Mississippi caused great subsistence problems for the army.

The Quartermaster furnished all non-food supplies except weapons and ammunition. Uniforms, tentage, shovels, wagons, and the mules to draw them -- these were his concerns. He was also responsible for all transportation of supplies, subsistence, and units. General Bragg's Chief Quartermaster was Major M. B. McMicken. The Ordnance Officer was Lieutenant Colonel Hypolite Oladowski. His responsibility was for the supply of weapons (rifles and cannon) and of the ammunition they used. The problems of ammunition supply can be seen in the message from Lt Col Oladowski to Colonel Wright at the Atlanta Arsenal quoted in the first chapter. The Army of Tennessee needed six calibers of infantry small arms ammunition: calibers .577, .58, .69, .54, .53, and .70. Cavalry requirements were similarly diverse. Artillery units were equipped with nine different guns.[3] In addition to supplying weapons and ammunition, the ordnance department evaluated the performance of the different weapons, reported the number of rounds fired in a battle, and reported on the ordnance of any kind captured from the enemy. Captain Charles Semple's report is typical (Semple was the Ordnance Officer for Breckenridge's Division):

> " . . . the ammunition made at the several arsenals of the Confederate States for the Enfield rifle, caliber .57, could, in my humble opinion, be

much improved by having the ball made sufficiently small to allow the lubrication on the outside of the cartridge, after the manner of the English cartridge. This would greatly facilitate the men in loading, and would prevent the leading of the arm, which now on all occasions of action happens. In this division there were nineteen instances of this particular arm becoming choked and unfit for use, from the cause above mentioned, which came immediately under my notice, but there several other cases of the same kind reported to me after the battle of the 20th ultimo. In all cases where I had issued the English cartridge (some of which I have got on hand) no such consequences were reported to me, nor have I ever heard of a single instance during my experience as ordnance officer, nearly eighteen months.

"I have also to report the complaint of the battery commanders of this division of the friction primers made at our arsenals, which they report as perfectly worthless and unreliable."[4]

The technical staff of the Army of Tennessee included the Signals Officer, the Chief Engineer, and the Chief of Artillery. The Chief of Ordnance, in addition to his logistics function, performed duties of a technical nature. In a modern command, these officers support both the operations and logistics staffs, as required. They did much the same for General Bragg. They brought either expertise in the employment and control of a specific arm, like the artillery; or in a specific technical discipline, like military engineering.

General Bragg's Chief of Artillery was Lieutenant Colonel James Hallonquist. He was the commanding general's advisor on the proper organization, use, and tactical employment of that arm. In addition, he monitored the state

of training within the various batteries, as well as the readiness of men, equipment, harness, and horses. In this latter area, he functioned as an additional Assistant Inspector General.

The Chief Engineer was Captain Stephen W. Presstman. As the army's engineer, he was responsible for planning and overseeing the construction or repair of field fortifications, entrenched lines, roads, and bridges. When there were no topographical engineers, as in the Chickamauga campaign, he might also be responsible for surveying and map making duties as well. In performing this function, he also provided General Bragg with an analysis of the effects of terrain on the conduct of a campaign. This map making function was somewhat less important to the Confederates than to the Federals. They were on their home ground, and often had soldiers in the ranks who were from the area of operations.

The Signals Officer was Captain Edward H. Cummins. His primary responsibility was maintaining communications with the Confederate War Department at Richmond, and with other army commanders in other theaters. Telegraphy was too cumbersome for normal use in communicating with subordinate commanders on campaign. On occasion, when subordinates were at great distance, it might be used. Early in the campaign, Bragg's chief means of communication to Buckner was by wire. There were times when semaphore stations or other visual

signals were used from one part of a battlefield to another. This technique was not of significance during this campaign.

The final functional group was the commander's special staff. This included the Judge Advocate, the Paymaster, and the Chief Surgeon. The Judge Advocate of the Army of Tennessee at this time was Lieutenant Colonel Harvey W. Walter. His modern equivalent would be the military judge. Any officer could be detailed as a trial counsel or defense counsel in a given court martial. Lt Col Walter's responsibility was to ensure that military courts were properly constituted and were conducted according to Confederate law and the Articles of War.

The army's Paymaster was Major Albert J. Smith. His was the responsibility for paying the soldiers. Payment was made from muster rolls. The Paymaster's Department personnel delivered the money to the unit location. The muster rolls, signed by the unit commander and by an officer from outside the unit, allowed the soldiers to receive their pay. Payment was unfortunately often in arrears, with individuals receiving pay as money was available.

The medical staff of the Army of Tennessee oversaw the health care of its soldiers, from care for the sick within its units, to battlefield casualty care, to the establishment of hospitals for the post-treatment recovery of the sick and wounded. General Bragg's Hospital Director was Samuel H. Stout, M. D. He had established a network of

hospitals to support the army. By the start of the Chickamauga campaign, these stretched from Chattanooga to Dalton, to Cassville and Marietta, and on to Atlanta.[5] Wounded who were fortunate were evacuated from the battlefield by detailed ambulance troops, by returning ordnance wagon, or by the assistance of fellow soldiers. After a rough triage, those thought able to recover from the required procedures were treated in makeshift surgeries near to the battlefield. After such treatment, evacuation to a hospital in the rear was likely. The army's medical staff supervised the hospitals, acquired medical supplies, oversaw the equipping of ambulances and brigade surgeries, and loosely supervised the regimental, brigade, and division surgeons.

The modern staff officer missing from this array is the Chaplain. In the CSA, there were no regularly appointed chaplains. Chaplains at hospitals, often were there through the charitable actions of local clergy. In the field with the army, there was no lack of itinerant ministers, and some served in the ranks. Sam Watkins, a Confederate private tells an apocryphal tale of one such minister marching with his regiment towards the battlefield at Chickamauga:

> "The reverend LL.D. stops . . . and says, 'Remember boys, that he who is killed will sup tonight in Paradise.' Some soldier hallooed at the top of his voice, 'Well, Parson, you come along and take supper with us.' Boom! whir! a bomb burst, and the parson at that moment put spurs to his horse and was seen to limber to the rear, and almost every soldier yelled out, 'The parson isn't hungry, and never eats supper.'"[6]

This was the staff at the army level -- General Bragg's staff. At corps, division, brigade, and regimental level, staffs also existed to assist the commander. These were less well developed, less a mirror of the staff departments in Richmond. Together with the army staff, they attempted to support their unit and its soldiers, and to provide their commanders with a command and control tool.

## PART II: LOWER LEVEL STAFFS

> "The average staff officer and courier were always called 'yaller dogs,' and were regarded as non-combatants and a nuisance, and the average private never let one pass without whistling and calling dogs. In fact, the general had to issue an army order threatening punishment for the ridicule hurled at staff officers and couriers. . . . The reason of [sic] this that the private knew and felt that there was just that much more loading, shooting, and fighting for him; and there are the fewest number of instances on record where a staff officer ever fired a gun in his country's cause . . . ."

Sam Watkins

The staffs at regimental level had few operational requirements. The regiment moved as part of the brigade, in pretty standard formations. It was commanded by its colonel, usually posted in the center rear of the formation. His lieutenant colonel was positioned on one flank, his major on the other. The three officers controlled the regiment by voice commands, augmented by drum rolls or bugle calls. What staff was needed was administrative and logistical in nature. Authorized staff officers were: one adjutant, one quartermaster, one surgeon, one assistant surgeon, and one chaplain.

The brigade was normally composed of three regiments, with a supporting battery of artillery. It usually

was commanded by a brigadier general. He was authorized a staff as follows: two aides-de-camp, one assistant adjutant general, one assistant quartermaster, one surgeon, and one commissary of subsistence.[8] By 1863, most brigades in the Army of Tennessee routinely added authorizations for brigade inspectors and ordnance officers. In practice, each brigade commander had whatever staff he felt he needed. Brigadier General Arthur M. Manigault was newly promoted and assigned to command of a brigade in Hindman's (formerly Withers') Division just after the Tullahoma campaign. He records his staff and brigade organization as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| A.M.M. | Brig. Gen'l Comdg |
| C. Irvine Walker | Capt. & Asst. Adj. General |
| Dan'l E. Huger | Capt. & Adj. & Inspector General |
| Wm. E. Huger | Lieut. & Aide-de-Camp |
| S.C. Muldon | Maj. & Asst. Quartermaster |
| Henry Hawkins | Maj. & Surgeon |
| S.E. Lucas | Maj. & Surgeon, Asst. Cmsry. of Subsistence |
| Jos. Johnson | Lieut. & Ordnance Officer |

| | |
|---|---|
| 34th Alabama Regt. | Col. J.C.B. Mitchell |
| 28th Alabama Regt. | Col. J.C. Reid |
| 24th Alabama Regt. | Col. J.N. Davis |
| 10th So. Carolina Regt. | Col. J.F. Pressley |
| 19th So. Carolina Regt. | Col. Thomas Shaw |
| Waters' Battery | Capt. D. Waters |

These Regiments were consolidated:

| | |
|---|---|
| 10th & 19th So. Carolina | Col. Pressley |
| 24th &28th Alabama | Col. Reid[9] |

This staff sufficed for a brigade which took 2025 officers and men into the Battle of Chickamauga.[10] For the battle

(and not included in the 2025), a detail of litter bearers numbered "102 men, 2 [Noncommissioned] officers, 1 commissioned officer . . . [there] was also a wagon guard of 64 men, 2 N.C. officers, 1 commissioned officer."[11] Manigault, proud of his new command, goes on to say:

> "The condition of the command at this period was excellent. The sick list averaged about 2 to 2 & 1/2 per cent, and the cases of indisposition were of a trifling character. Our transportation was fair, and the equipment otherwise quite satisfactory."[12]

General Manigault actually had a brigade staff manned almost exactly to authorization. In moving to division and corps level staffs the picture becomes less clear. Commanders of these units[13] were usually Major Generals. If division commanders, they had usually been commanders of brigades. If corps commanders, they had usually been division commanders. As they progressed to higher command, they often took some of their staff officers with them from one assignment to another. In so doing, they tended to increase these staffs over time. In addition, there was no definitive standard on what a corps or division commander was authorized for a staff. The size of a corps or division staff reflected the commander's comfort level. He had as many staff officers as he felt he needed. As a result there was wide variation in the size of division and corps staffs.

Division and corps command was the first level where there was a real need for an operations staff. These units were too large to be commanded in battle by the unassisted efforts of one or two men. In addition, subordinate units (brigades or divisions) could be added or detached as needed. They often operated at some distance from one another. Finally, both the training and the tactical employment of a division or corps was beyond the ability of one man to control.

This need for an operational staff at division and corps was another factor in increasing the size of these staffs. During a battle, additional aides and officer couriers would be needed at this level of command. These officers could also be used to monitor the status and progress of subordinate elements or adjacent units. This need was often satisfied by the commander's use of additional aides-de-camp, or by having more AAG personnel. Members of the AIG departments also often filled this role. In performing these operational duties, the staffs functioned at a rudimentary level. There was still no dedicated operations or intelligence section, and much of the operational staff effort was in fact performed by the commander.

Data on corps staffs in the Army of Tennessee during this campaign reflects the wide variation between corps in their length of organization. Several of these corps were *ad hoc* organizations, hastily constituted for this campaign.

The army started the campaign with two corps, and ended it with five. At times division commanders controlled so many brigades that they were *de facto* corps.

Lieutenant General Polk was the longest serving corps commander in the Army of Tennessee. It is difficult to identify all of his staff officers, since his after action reports and correspondence seldom mention them. After the Battle of Stone's River, he named his principal staff officers in his report on the battle. That staff is listed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Staff of Polk's Corps at Stone's River**[14]

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj. Thomas M. Jack | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Maj. George Williamson | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Lieut. Col T. F. Sevier | Asst. Inspector General |
| Lieut. P. B. Spence | Asst. Inspector General |
| Lieut. John Rawle | Acting Chief of Ordnance |
| Capt Felix H. Robertson | Acting Chief of Artillery |
| Maj. J. J. Murphy | Chief Commissary |
| Capt E. B. Sayers | Engineer |
| Lieut. W. J. Morris | Engineer |
| Maj. Thomas Peters | Quartermaster |
| Maj. R. M. Mason | Quartermaster |
| Lieut W. N. Mercer Otey | Signal Officer |
| Dr. W. C. Cavanaugh | Medical Director |
| Lieut W. B. Richmond | Aide-de-Camp |
| Lieut. Col. Henry C. Yeatman | Volunteer Aide |

From this list, which did not include all of his staff assistants, the size of Polk's staff can be estimated. Of course, many of these officers can be confirmed in the same positions during the Chickamauga campaign. Those who cannot are: Major Williamson, severely wounded at Stone's

River,[15] Lieut. Col. Yeatman, and Capt. Robertson (who, as Major Robertson, commanded General Bragg's reserve artillery at Chickamauga). Although Stone's River came several months before the Chickamauga campaign, most of the staff were presumably still in place. There are no orders relieving principal staff officers after Stone's River, and his corps had been only slightly engaged in the Tullahoma campaign. Table 6 lists General Polk's staff at Chickamauga. It does not include all of the staff assistants.

**Table 6: Staff of Polk's Corps at Chickamauga**[16]

| | |
|---|---|
| Lt. Col. Thomas M. Jack | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Lt. Col T. F. Sevier | Asst. Inspector General |
| Lieut. P. B. Spence | Asst. Inspector General |
| Lieut. John Rawle | Acting Chief of Ordnance |
| Lt. Col. Marshall T. Polk | Chief of Artillery |
| Lieut. W. M. Polk | Asst. Chief of Artillery |
| Maj. J. J. Murphy | Chief Commissary |
| Capt E. B. Sayers | Engineer |
| Lieut. W. J. Morris | Engineer |
| Maj. Thomas Peters | Quartermaster |
| Maj. R. M. Mason | Quartermaster |
| Lieut W. N. Mercer Otey | Signal Officer |
| Dr. W. C. Cavanaugh | Medical Director |
| Lieut. W. B. Richmond | Aide-de-Camp |
| Lieut. Wm. D. Gale | Aide-de-Camp |
| Lieut. A. H. Polk | Aide-de-Camp |

Major General D.H. Hill, awaiting confirmation of his promotion to Lieutenant General, came from North Carolina and took command of Hardee's Corps early in the Chickamauga campaign. His was the second of the regularly constituted corps in Bragg's army. Soon after assuming command,

he announced the staff officers listed in Table 7. Hill's staff is the easiest to identify in this campaign. It was announced in General Orders on 3 August 1863.

**Table 7: Staff of Hill's Corps**[17]

| | |
|---|---|
| Lt. Col Archer Anderson | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Maj. J.W. Ratchford | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Maj. J.L. Cross | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Maj. Alphonso C. Avery | Asst. Inspector General |
| Maj. W. C. Duxbury | Chief of Ordnance |
| Maj. I. Scherck | Chief Commissary |
| Capt. T. Coleman | Chief Engineer |
| Capt. E. H. Ewing | Acting Chief Quartermaster |
| Capt. Bradford | Paymaster |
| Surg. A. R. Erskine | Chief Surgeon |
| Asst. Surg. J.F. Young | Medical Purveyor |
| 1st Lieut. George C. Bain | Signal Officer |
| Lt. Col. J. W. Bondurant | Chief of Artillery |
| 1st Lieut. James A. Reid | Aide-de-Camp |
| 1st Lieut. R. H. Morrison | Aide-de-Camp |
| Mr. George West | Volunteer Aide |

Newly appointed to replace General Hardee, General Hill had little time to develop his own standards and procedures in what was a hybrid staff. His staff had some officers who did not accompany Hardee to Mississippi (e.g., Lieut. Col. Archer Anderson, the AAG and chief of staff) as well as several staff officers that General Hill brought with him from North Carolina. Major Ratchford, one of the AAG staff, accompanied Hill to the west, as had Lieutenant Reid, his aide-de-camp, and Lieut. Col. Bondurant, the Chief of Artillery.

The only regularly constituted corps with a smaller staff on the field at Chickamauga was that of Lieutenant

General Longstreet, just arriving from Virginia. During the battle on the 20th, he had four officers with him: Lieut. Col. Sorrel, his AAG and Chief of Staff; Lieut. Col. Manning, Chief of Ordnance; Major Latrobe, AIG; and Capt. Manning, Signal Officer. In addition, Major Walton, Acting Chief of Subsistence, and Major Keiley, Acting Chief Quartermaster, were supervising the detraining of arriving units at Catoosa Station.[18]

Of the *ad hoc* corps, Hood's and Walker's were formed by giving these two division commanders an additional division to control. They had no time before the battle to form a real corps organization. Their best option was to split their staff, using some to assist them in the command and control of the corps. However, they had to leave sufficient staff at the division level to help the replacement commander (one of the brigade commanders) control that organization.

For the units normally commanded by these officers, as well as in the brigade commanded by Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson, this splitting of the staff was critical. What was done in Johnson's Division is a good example. General Johnson commanded a provisional division including his own brigades and those of Generals Gregg and McNair. He took from his brigade staff his aides (Capt. W. T. Blakemore, who acted as the division's AAG, and Lieut. George Marchbanks), his Brigade Inspector (Lieut E. R. Smith), and

his Ordnance Officer (Lieut. James B. Lake). The brigade staff retained the Ordnance Sergeant (Sergeant J. F. Baxter), Quartermaster and Commissary officers, and Surgeon. Officers were borrowed from the regiments of the brigade to assist the new brigade commander, Colonel Fulton, as aides.[19] This splitting of the staff was the best compromise achieved by any commander in Johnson's position during the campaign.

Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner, the final commander of an *ad hoc* corps, had a different staff. He had been the commander of a separate department (the Department of East Tennessee) until a month before the battle. Designated a corps commander with the joining of his units to the Army of Tennessee, his staff still reflected the departmental staff which it had been. He had, for example, a Judge Advocate. This position was necessary at department level, but not always at a corps. Adjusting this staff to the requirements of a corps in a campaign or battle was not completed when battle came. Identifying those officers who served as a corps staff for him, and distinguishing those who kept their departmental duties, is extremely difficult. Both his after action report, and the correspondence to or from Buckner's headquarters contained in the Official Record, reveal few of his staff officers. The list in Table 8 is only a partial and tentative one.

Table 8: Staff of Buckner's Corps[20]

| | |
|---|---|
| Col. Victor von Sheliha | Chief of Staff |
| Maj. William F. Mastin | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Capt. J. N. Galleher | Asst. Adjutant General |
| Maj. Thomas K. Porter | Chief of Artillery |
| Maj. S. H. Reynolds | Chief of Ordnance |
| Maj. James Nocquet | Chief Engineer |
| Lieut. John M. Sharp | Aide-de-Camp |

Colonel Sheliha is the one corps staff officer who consistently refers to himself (and is just as consistently referred to by others) as a chief of staff. General Longstreet's *de facto* chief of staff, Lt. Col. Sorrel, is usually referred to as an AAG, which was his correct title. Only on the battlefield did Sorrel and others speak of him as a chief of staff. Yet he clearly functioned as one all the time, not just during battles.

There is no account of what part Colonel Sheliha took during the battle. During the campaign, he seems to have managed General Buckner's headquarters. At the least, he reviewed and approved the majority of correspondence leaving the headquarters. More likely, he actively took his commander's instructions and turned them into orders and other correspondence with subordinate commanders. He acted on his own authority in the general's absence, and was involved in operational and intelligence matters in addition to those of departmental administration.

## PART III: STAFF PERSONNEL

The staff officers of the Army of Tennessee shared many common characteristics. By 1863, most had served in their staff positions through both the Tullahoma and Stone's River campaigns. Many had served as staff officers for much longer. Once appointed in a specific staff department, officers generally remained in that staff specialty. What mobility existed within the staff was normally between different level staffs (i.e., regiment to brigade, brigade to division, division to corps). Another kind of mobility was out of the staff to command of a line company, battalion, or regiment. Staff officers were appointed by the commander for whom they worked, subject to the approval of the Confederate government in Richmond. Their line counterparts, at least through company grade, were elected by their soldiers.

The process of obtaining an staff appointment was an arcane one. The account given by Lieut. Col. Sorrel of his appointment is a typical one. At the start of the war, he was a junior clerk in the banking department of the Central Railroad in Savannah, Georgia. He served in the Georgia Hussars, mustered in for only thirty days to Confederate

service. He failed to obtain an appointment in Richmond despite the influence of his brother, Dr. Francis Sorrel, who was an important figure in the Surgeon-General's Department. In Manassas he wrangled an introduction to General Longstreet, then commanding a brigade, through General Beauregard's AAG, Colonel Thomas Jordan, a family friend. This led to his service to Longstreet as a volunteer aide during the battle of First Manassas. Longstreet must have been pleased with him, since he obtained Sorrel's appointment as his AAG, with the rank of Captain.[21]

Few of the staff had any pre-war military training. Brigadier General William W. Mackall, the army's Chief of Staff, was a West Point graduate, Class of 1837.[22] Lieutenant W. N. Mercer Otey, who was General Polk's signal officer, had attended the Virginia Military Institute.[23] It is unclear from his service record whether he graduated or not. During the Chickamauga campaign, these two are the only staff officers in the Army of Tennessee with any professional military education. Other officers with any military schooling had by now moved from staff to line service. Lieut. Col. Robert Bogardus Snowden is an example. He had been a student of General Bushrod Johnson's at the Western Military Institute.[24] Early in the war he had served as Johnson's AAG. By the Chickamauga campaign, he was commanding the 25th Tennessee Infantry.

The service records of Confederate staff officers reliably reveal few things about their subjects. Their ages are seldom included, unless internally in a recorded document. Similarly, the pre-war education, occupation, and economic status are not recorded. The records are a collection of letters, pay vouchers, claims for forage or other expenses, extracts from orders, and official correspondence. Only two things are consistently recorded. The first is the state from which an officer was appointed. The second is a summary of his service, showing for whom he worked and in what capacity.

The state from which an officer was appointed is the first of these two data to be considered. This may not be the same as the state that the officer considered his home state. In some areas, Chattanooga for example, a regional center chosen as a place of assembly for troops in 1861 drew men from several states. Consideration of the source of staff officers by region will minimize this effect. Otherwise, the state from which an officer was appointed is a good general indication of where he lived and worked before the war.

Since the Army of Tennessee was a western army, it would not be surprising to find that its staff officers were primarily derived from the western states. In Richard McMurry's book, Two Great Rebel Armies, he uses a convention useful here. He classified the Confederacy into three

regions, from east to west.[25] In analyzing the origins of Confederate staff officers, I have modified his categories somewhat, but kept his general scheme. For the purposes of considering an officers origin, I have defined the Confederacy's regions as follows. The Eastern Confederacy includes Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Central Confederacy has Georgia and Florida. The Western Confederacy includes Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, the Indian Territory, Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Table 9 shows the distribution of staff officer origins for a sample of 52 members of the army and corps staffs. The data used is from the available service records in the Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men. It therefore only suggests what more research might discover. Since he had so few staff officers on the field, and his corps belongs so firmly to the Army of Northern Virginia, General Longstreet's staff has been excluded from the survey.

**Table 9: Origins of Army of Tennessee Staff Officers**[26]

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Eastern | 8 | 15 |
| Central | 5 | 10 |
| Western | 34 | 65 |
| Unknown | 5 | 10 |
| Totals | 52 | 100 |

What does this information tell us? The large percentage of staff officers from the western Confederacy is not unexpected. This area provided the largest proportion of both units and officers to the Army of Tennessee. That most staff officers come from this area suggests that they did not, in general, bring a great deal of civilian managerial expertise or experience to the Army of Tennessee. The western states of the Confederacy were economically underdeveloped in the mid-Nineteenth Century. The western Confederacy had very little in the way of manufacturing and large scale banking or commercial establishments. Tennessee is the exception, with its industrial development arcund Nashville. These were the kinds of businesses that produced people with a high degree of managerial skills. These skills are essential in a military staff. Modern armies go to great lengths to teach these skills to their staff officers and noncommissioned personnel. The Army of Tennessee's staff had very little civilian managerial experience to draw on.

It was still possible for a commander to teach staff skills to his staff officers. Each of the generals commanding at corps or higher level was educated at West Point (except for Brigadier General Forrest). Unfortunately, this military education did not fully prepare these gentlemen to train staff officers for large units like corps and armies. The principal commanders in the Army of Tennessee had varied

background in the U S. Army. Lieutenant General Polk had left the army within six months of his graduation from West Point. General Bragg himself had resigned his commission in 1854. The army in which they had served was one of small postings and improvisation. The staff experience which they acquired was therefore primarily concerned with military administration and the procurement of supplies for their commands. They had little or no pre-war experience in intelligence, or the training and operations of forces above the brigade level. What experience they had gained during the Civil War had been as commanders, not staff officers. There is a significant difference in the intellectual perspective and skills involved between the two.

The functional areas in which senior commanders were best able to train their subordinate staff officers were administration and logistics. These were the most 'civilian' of the required staff skills, with a high skill transfer for those officers with managerial skills and pre-war experience. The operational and intelligence skills which were the army staff's biggest weakness were precisely those areas which the commanders were poorly prepared to either evaluate or improve their subordinates skills. They were also the skill areas with the least skill transfer from civilian experience.

The second bit of information consistently contained in the service records is an officer's job history. Mostly

this latter data shows the amount of time an officer served in a staff department, and for whom (both for what commander and at what level staff) he worked. It can be used as an indicator of the degree to which he had been trained to perform his specific staff responsibilities (subject to the caveat outlined above). The same sample of 48 staff officers used to derive Table 9 shows that the average officer had been serving in his current staff department for 14 months. Usually, that time was served within the Army of the Tennessee. Other than those officers brought to the army by General Hill (4 of the 8 officers listed in Table 9 as being from the Eastern Confederacy), there were few recent arrivals.

## PART IV: ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

The staff officers in the Army of Tennessee were an experienced group by the summer of 1863. Most had been performing their duties since Bragg's offensive north to Perryville the year before. They would, over this period, have developed working relationships with one another. The reorganization of the corps after Stone's River would have disrupted this arrangement, but there had been time since then to repair any disturbance. The more recent organizational instability would have been more injurious. It was accompanied by an influx of units and staffs from elsewhere in the Confederacy. These staffs would ordinarily have needed time to work into the usual procedures of the Army of Tennessee. Time was one resource they did not have.

In any military organization there is an internal working dynamic. New people joining it will change it, but usually this change is a gradual one. They will more often change their own operating patterns to conform to that of the organization. In the stress of active campaigning, a new subordinate unit joining the Army of Tennessee from another department would have had to quickly adapt its staff procedures to those of the army staff. There was bound to

be friction as a result. The incoming staff could not help but make judgements about those staff procedures that did not match its own. It will conform, but not be comfortable in doing so. This friction will tend imperceptibly to slow the response of the subordinate unit. Over time, this effect will disappear. Again, time was not available.

General Bragg reorganized his army repeatedly during this campaign. Each time, he increased the difficulties of staff communication and coordination. Even in an army with a strong common staff doctrine, this constant state of change will produce undesirable results. In the Army of Tennessee, which had a weak staff doctrine, the effect was worse. In such an army, staff coordination depends on the personal relationships and cooperation of the staff principals at different levels. The frequent reorganizations made this process a halting one. In an army where the senior commanders are distrustful of one another, any hindrance to staff integration and ease of interaction will have ill effects.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Martin Van Creveld, Command In War, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 6.

[2]Connelly, 125.

[3]Oladowski to Wright, 13 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 494-95.

[4]Report of Capt. Charles Semple, Ordnance Officer; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2, 202.

[5]Connelly, 139.

[6]Sam R. Watkins, "Co. Aytch", (New York: MacMillan, 1962), 103.

[7]Watkins, 47-48.

[8]Hittle, 187.

[9]Tower, ed., Manigault, 79.

[10]Ibid., 102.

[11]Ibid., 102.

[12]Ibid., 79.

[13]By 'unit' in this context, I do not wish to imply that these were regularly constituted organizations. In the Army of Tennessee at this time, most corps had two divisions. Divisions usually had three brigades. But these were not firm tables of organization. Bragg's frequent reorganizations and the frequent need for *ad hoc* arrangements on the field might result in a five brigade division or a one brigade corps.

[14]Report of Lieut. Gen. Leonidas Polk, C.S. Army, commanding Army Corps, 28 February 1863; O.R., XX, Pt. 1: 692-93.

[15]Ibid., 692.

[16]This list includes those staff officers from the Stone's River campaign except as noted in this chapter. Additions are based on correspondence to or from Polk's Corps and other commanders' after action reports in the O.R., Volumes XXIII, XXX, and LII. Finally, the CSR, microfilm rolls 51, 101, 165, 191, 199, 211, and 223 confirmed the presence of, or added names to the staff list.

[17]General Orders No. 39, Hqtrs, Hill's Corps, 3 August 1863; O.R., XXIII: Pt.2, 949-50.

[18]Report of Lieut. Gen. James Longstreet, C.S. Army, commanding Left Wing, -- October 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 290.

[19]Report of Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson, C. S. Army, commanding Provisional Division, 24 October 1863; O.R., XXX. Pt. 2: 451-69. Report of Col. John S. Fulton, Forty-Fourth Tennessee Infantry, commanding Johnson's Brigade, 30 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 471-79.

[20]There is no list in the O.R. of Buckner's staff. The list in this table is compiled from the reports and correspondence in volumes XXIII, XXX, and LII. Additional names have been added based on individual service records contained in the CSR.

[21]G. Moxley Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 20-24, 31-32.

[22]Ezra J. Warner, Generals In Grey (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 203.

[23]Service Record of W. N. M. Otey, CSR, microfilm roll number 331-.

[24]Charles M. Cummings, Yankee Quaker Confederate General (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 136.

[25]Richard M. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 24.

[26]Data for this table comes from the microfilmed records of the CSR. A full list of the officers whose records were examined for this survey is at Appendix 2.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## STAFF PERFORMANCE AT CHICKAMAUGA

### PART I: EVALUATING STAFF PERFORMANCE

> ". . .it is for the very purpose of permitting the general-in-chief to give his whole attention to the supreme direction of operations that he ought to be provided with staff officers competent to relieve him of details of execution. Their functions are therefore necessarily very intimately connected; and woe to an army where these authorities cease to act in concert! This want of harmony is often seen, -- first, because generals are men and have faults, and secondly, because in every army there are found individual interests and pretensions, producing rivalry of the chiefs of staff and hindering them in performing their duties."[1]
>
> Jomini

In evaluating the performance of the staff of the Army of Tennessee, it is a difficult matter to avoid using today's standards of evaluation. In 1863, staff officers and commanders did not think in terms of battlefield operating systems or decision cycles, or any of the conceptual framework that modern doctrine prescribes. The Army of Tennessee's staff must be evaluated in terms of what they believed was their proper role, and only then in terms of how well they fulfilled that role. The staff's roles and

functional relationships have been discussed in earlier chapters. This chapter will assess the degree to which the staff met contemporary standards for performance, and what effect their performance had on that of the army as a whole.

Standards for staff performance were not precisely spelled out in American military literature of the Civil War period. Today's training and evaluation outlines, describing minutely what subordinate tasks have to be accomplished (and how well each must be done) in order to complete a staff action, had yet to be developed. Other than the War Department's Regulations, the U.S. Army had no written staff doctrine or procedures as it went to war in 1861. To fill the need, especially for the many inexperienced officers in the enlarged Army, there were books like Lieutenant Craighill's The Army Officer's Pocket Companion; Principally Designed for Staff Officers in the Field. The Confederacy similarly relied on private enterprise to provide a written foundation for its officers. Craighill's book, Scott's Military Dictionary, Hardee's Tactics, and Jomini were the most common.

These works do describe the workings of military staffs within units, and provide rough standards for evaluating staff performance. Jomini is the most important, for two reasons. First, the others are based to varying degrees on his works. Secondly, the officers who commanded at corps or higher level in the Army of Tennessee in 1863 had been

educated at West Point (with the sole exception of Nathan Bedford Forrest). At West Point it was Jomini, as interpreted by Dennis Hart Mahan, who was the foundation of higher military education. Colonel Scott's book was also widely available before the war, as was Hardee's. Both would have been familiar to antebellum professional soldiers. Craighill's book was published as the war began, and so was more difficult for Confederate officers to acquire. It contained no new material, however. Said Craighill, "This book, like most others of the present day, is a compilation. Nothing in it is original with the compiler except its arrangement, and that is perhaps its worst feature."[2] Its principle utility is the way it summarized the accepted view of staff roles in both American armies.

Looking then to Jomini and the others, their works suggest three areas of staff evaluation: the logistical support of the army; the timely communication of readily understood reports, orders, and plans; and the ability of the staff to serve as additional eyes and ears for the commander. The primacy of the staff's logistical role is a basic assumption of the period. For example, Jomini placed his discussion of staff roles and functions in his chapter on logistics.

## PART II: LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF THE ARMY

Logistics posed several problems during the Chickamauga campaign. General Bragg began the campaign with his logistics base in Chattanooga. During the respite after the Tullahoma campaign, he had to protect this as his primary base, build up a secondary base at Atlanta, and decide on an intermediate base if forced out of Chattanooga. In addition, the sending of reinforcements from Mississippi and Virginia created additional work for his logistics staff. These troops had to be transported into the theater. This job required coordination with the General Johnston's staff, the CSA departmental staff, the Atlanta depot staff, and with General Longstreet's staff as they arrived. Once with the Army of Tennessee, the reinforcing units must be fed and provided with horses and wagons as required (the units sent from Mississippi had been sent without their organic transport).[3] In addition, the military depots in Atlanta had to have sufficient stocks of cartridges to support the new arrivals.

Once forced out of Chattanooga, the army's base of supplies had to be changed. Chattanooga and its surrounding depots had important stockpiles which must be moved if

possible, destroyed if not. In one incident, Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson, operating his brigade as a separate command to guard the rail line, was ordered to destroy 90,000 rations at Chickamauga Station. At the request of his company commanders, the brigade loaded bread onto rail cars all night while fighting to delay the Federals. The rations were saved.[4] As supplies were moved, new depots must be established.

On 10 September, a depot (forward supply base) was ordered established at Resaca, Georgia.[5] Colonel Jones, one of General Bragg's aides-de-camp, was placed in charge of the Resaca depot. The order assigning him this responsibility specified:

> "All staff officers of the army will communicate through him with their subordinates at that place. He will also regulate the running of the railroad trains between Atlanta and the northern terminus of the road. All abuses and irregularities in the matters above stated which may exist he will promptly correct."[6]

This apparently was an attempt to quickly restore regularity to the logistical support of the army. Colonel Jones worked with Colonel Wright, commander of the Atlanta depot, to keep the rail cars from sitting idle, and the reinforcing units coming north to Bragg's army.[7]

As the situation developed, and General Bragg saw an opportunity to cut the Union forces off from Chattanooga, he

directed the movement of the supply base forward -- to Ringgold, closer to the army.[8] By establishing his base forward, Bragg reduced the distance his units' wagons would have to travel to bring up rations, ammunition, or other supplies. It also meant that when reinforcing units arrived, they could be fed, given ammunition, and linked up with wagons much nearer the army. When they left the forward logistics base, they had much less distance to travel before being committed. They could then be introduced into battle relatively fresh.

Other actions were taken to regularize the daily resupply of units. When necessary, unit trains were diverted from the Ringgold depot to alternate sites. On the 17th of September, the corps were directed to use Chickamauga Station for resupply, since "the general supply train cannot be used for that purpose at present."[9] Sometimes corps commanders felt the need for more control over their corps trains. General Polk's Assistant Quartermaster, Major Mason, was directed on 17 September to ". . .take charge of the baggage trains of the corps on the Dalton road . . .and move them via Lowrie's over Taylor's Ridge to Gordon's Spring, at or near which you will have them parked and held subject to orders."[10]

The shifting and reorganizing of the army's supply base meant a lot of work for the staff officers, especially at corps and army level. Added to the job of transporting

reinforcing brigades, it must have been a considerable burden both to General Bragg's Quartermaster, Major McMicken, and to Colonel Wright in Atlanta. Throughout the Chickamauga campaign, the logistics staff did its job well. Units received ammunition and food in sufficient quantities. The depot in Atlanta even found shoes for some of the army's units. Lieut. Col. (later Brigadier General) G. Moxley Sorrel, General Longstreet's AAG, assessed the performance of Bragg's logistics staff. "The subsistence and quartermaster's departments were well supplied with food and forage, but weak in transportation."[11] Transportation for units during the campaign was standardized in late August as shown in Table 10, although precise compliance with this order (and a continuing lack of transport) remained a problem.

Table 10 illustrates the order of magnitude of the transportation problem faced by the army's Quartermasters. To meet the demand at all wagons frequently had to perform multiple functions. This flexibility was crucial during and after a battle. Battles placed great burdens on the transportation systems of Civil War armies. Ammunition and wounded men were the two greatest problems. Ammunition was used in large quantities. Wounded men who reached the field hospitals to receive treatment required evacuation afterwards. After a battle the victorious army had to evacuate those wounded (of both armies) still on the field. The

artillery pieces and small arms left by the defeated army ad to be gathered as well. This was a particularly important task for the Confederates, since it represented an important source of supply. In the Army of Tennessee, these added burdens fell on an already overburdened Quartermaster service. The reinforcing units from Virginia and Mississippi had arrived without their own transportation. General

**Table 10. Transportation Allowance, Army of Tennessee**[12]

| Unit | 6-Horse Wagon | 4-Horse Wagon | 2-Horse Wagon |
|---|---|---|---|
| Corps: | | | |
| Headquarters | 4 | | |
| Staff | | 10 | 4 |
| Divisions: | | | |
| Headquarters | | 3 | |
| Staff | | 3 | |
| Brigades: | | | |
| Headquarters | | 1 | |
| Staff | | 1 | 1 |
| Ordnance | | 15* | |
| Artillery** | | 9 | 3 |
| Baggage | | | 12 |
| Regiments: | | | |
| Headquarters | | 1 | |
| Staff | | | 1 |
| Company Officers | | 1 | |
| Baggage | | 8*** | |
| Forage | | 1 for every 7 wagons in the field. | |

Notes: *Based on 3500-man brigade, and a wagon capacity of 15000 rounds.
**Based on 3 batteries per brigade.
***Based on an 800-man regiment.

Bragg's Quartermaster had to divide his already too few wagons to provide for all units. The effects can be seen in the unit transportation allowances after the Battle of Chickamauga. These are summarized in Table 11.

**Table 11. Post-Battle Transportation Allowance, Army of Tennessee**[13]

| Unit | 6-Horse Wagon | 4-Horse Wagon | 2-Horse Wagon |
|---|---|---|---|
| Corps: | | | |
| Headquarters and Staff | | 6 | 1 |
| Divisions: | | | |
| Headquarters and Staff | | 4 | 1 |
| Reserve train | | 12* | |
| Brigades: | | | |
| Headquarters and Staff | | 2 | |
| Ordnance | | 4** | |
| Artillery*** | | 9 | |
| Regiments: | | | |
| Headquarters and Staff | | 1 | |
| Company Officers | | 2 | |
| Baggage | | 3**** | |
| Forage | | 1 for every 7 wagons in the field. | |

Notes:
*Based on a 4600-man Division.
**Based on 1500-man brigade.
***Based on 3 batteries per brigade. Additional wagons to haul a total of 200 rounds per battery (incl rounds carried in caissons) were authorized.
****Based on an 600-man regiment.

A unit's ordnance wagons were its best multipurpose vehicles. They were used first to resupply a unit with ammunition. The basic load for a Civil War Confederate soldier was 100 rounds. Sixty of these were carried in his regiment's ordnance wagons. The individual infantryman only carried forty in his cartridge box. The high rates of fire therefore required frequent resupply. Jackson's Brigade of Cheatham's Division is an example. It took 1200 men into the battle. They fired 53,660 rounds during the battle.[14] Although this only represents about 48 rounds per man, several resupply runs would have been made by the brigade's ordnance wagons. After heavy fighting, a lull in the battle was used for resupply. Each commander wanted his men's cartridge boxes filled as often as possible.

The second use for ordnance wagons was to evacuate wounded soldiers. After the battle the wounded of both sides still lay on the field. Ambulances did not have enough capacity for the task of evacuation. Details of litter bearers picked up some of the load. Ordnance wagons were those best available to assist. Wagons hauling food and fodder had still to perform those functions if both wounded and those not casualties were to eat. In addition, supply trains would have to be organized for field hospitals. Organizing the support of the hospitals was an early act of the army staff after the battle. The circular order, excerpted below, was one of the first issued by General

Bragg's headquarters after the battle. Its instructions indicate good intentions more than the means to put them into effect.

> "The wounded of both armies will be treated in the field hospitals until transportation can be procured and their condition is such that they can be taken with safety to hospitals in the rear. The medical director will select and have detailed the proper number of medical officers to remain in charge of this service until all are removed. The quartermaster-in-chief will furnish a sufficient supply train for provisions, and this will be used by the medical director to send to the rear such sick and wounded as may bear transportation from time to time."[15]

The number of casualties produced by the battle was so great that the medical system of the Army of Tennessee was swamped by them. No Civil War army, on either side, was equipped to handle wounded men in such numbers.

## PART III: COMMUNICATING THE COMMANDER'S INTENT

The second area in which the staff can be evaluated is their ability to communicate clear orders and plans to subordinate units, and to receive accurate information on the status and capabilities of those units. The orders and plans therefore had to: be based in reality, articulate the commander's intent, and be sent in a timely manner. This is really an indication of the degree to which the army's command and control system functioned effectively.

Modern soldiers, accustomed to real time communications, must make a significant mental adjustment when reading Civil War orders. Because of the time and distance involved for an army commander to communicate with his corps commanders, it was impractical for his orders to give concrete missions and deadlines. By the time the subordinate received the order, the situation could have changed, making the order an inappropriate one. Therefore orders, especially after the start of a battle, were rarely preemptory. Usually, an order gave a subordinate the action his commander desired him to take. Almost always, the order was qualified with a phrase such as "if it is practicable for you to do so." The commander had to trust in the judgement and

capacity of his subordinate commanders. So strong was this practice that a commander receiving an order from his superior felt it was his right to disregard it if he judged the order unfeasible. Even explicit orders were frequently disregarded. In this environment, it took a strong commander and a clearly stated intent to achieve unity of action.

Tracking an order through different levels of command is similarly difficult. Orders seldom had any indication of the time at which they were sent, although they usually were dated. When they do have a time reference, it might have several meanings. It might be the time the commander verbally gave the order to a staff officer. It might just as easily be the time at which the order left the headquarters. In any case, given the lack of watches that was common among both commanders and their staffs, any time reference more precise than morning, noon, evening, or the like should be treated with great suspicion.

The location of the sending headquarters was usually noted in the order heading. The person to whom addressed is noted as well, but not that person's location. An order addressed to a subordinate commander might be given to him, if he happened to meet the courier carrying the order. Arriving at his headquarters while the commander was gone, an order might be acted on by his principle staff officer. It could be redirected to the subordinate commander, if his headquarters staff knew his whereabouts. Or it might sit at

his headquarters awaiting his arrival. All of this potential for delays or errors of transmission compounded the tendency toward vague orders noted above.

Other Confederate armies seemed able to surmount these problems. General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was the only other army comparable in size and importance to the Army of Tennessee throughout the war. It is generally credited with excellent staff work and timely orders. Even in this army however, permissive orders rather than specific directives were the norm. In the Army of Tennessee, staff procedures were apparently not as well developed as those in Lee's army. Lieut. Col. Sorrel noted the difference. He was surprised that none of General Bragg's staff officers met Longstreet at Catoosa Station, nor was there any guide to lead Longstreet from the station to Bragg's headquarters.[16] It took Longstreet nine hours to reach Bragg's headquarters, and he was nearly captured by Union soldiers enroute.[17] Lieutenant Colonel Sorrel summarized the command situation within the Army of Tennessee as follows:

> "The army gave one the feeling of a very loose organization. There were indeed corps, so called, but not that compact, shoulder-to-shoulder make-up of Lee's army. There a First Corps man would so speak of himself, just as a Third Georgia Regiment man would speak of the regiment to which he belonged.
>
> "The tone of the army among its higher officers toward the commander was the worst conceivable. Bragg was the object of hatred and contempt, and it was almost openly so expressed. His great officers

> gave him no confidence as a general-in-chief. His army was thus left a helpless machine, and its great disaster in November at Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain could easily be foreseen with Bragg retained in command."[18]

Sorrel's comments, written after the fact and perhaps tinged with loyalty to Longstreet, may be taken with a grain of salt. But they do point up two key problems within the command climate of the Army of Tennessee. These were the distrust and division within the senior levels of command, and the debilitating effects of frequent organizational changes. General Longstreet wrote Secretary Seddon on 26 September with his own assessment.

> "You will be surprised to learn that this army has neither organization nor mobility, and I have doubts if its commander can give it them. . . . I hoped to find [General Bragg] willing and anxious to do all things that would aid us in our great cause, and ready to receive what aid he could get from his subordinates. It seems that I was greatly mistaken. It seems that he cannot adopt and adhere to any plan or course, whether of his own or of some one else."[19]

One episode illustrates the problems that both army and corps staffs had in trying to impose a commanders will on the battlefield. It shows the effects of organizational confusion between senior and subordinate commanders. The selected situation is General Hill's failure to attack at dawn on 20 September, after the prior night's reorganization of the army.

On the evening of 19 September, in dividing his army into two wings, General Bragg placed Hill's Corps in General Polk's Right Wing. Bragg's after action report states that "the proper commanders were summoned to my camp fire, and there received specific information and instructions touching the dispositions of the troops and for the operations of the next morning."[20] Bragg's intent was to begin the next dy's attack at daylight, *en echelon* from north to south. Unfortunately General Hill -- whose corps would start the attack, and who had until now functioned directly under Bragg -- was not at this meeting. Nor was it followed up with a written order from army headquarters. General Longstreet was not even there, being still on the way from Catoosa Station.

The total confusion that night seems incredible today. General Bragg, believing his job done, went to bed. Longstreet found him about 11 p.m., and woke him to receive the order for the next day's attack. General Polk sent a written order at 11:30 p.m. to his principal subordinates, Generals Hill, Cheatham, and Walker. It specified a daylight attack by Hill's Corps and Cheatham's Division, with Walker's Corps in reserve.[21] General Cheatham reported that he received these orders at about 1:00 a.m. on the 20th.[22] General Walker also received these orders that night.[23]

Polk's orders missed General Hill. Involved with the evening attack of Cleburne's division, Hill remained at the north end of the field until almost 11:00 p.m. by his report. Then he went in search of Bragg, not having word of the reorganization of the army. On the way he was told that Breckinridge's division had come up from Lee and Gordon's Mill. Hill sent his aide Lieutenant Reid to move the division to the right flank of his corps position. At midnight, still searching for Bragg, Hill encountered Lieutenant Colonel Archer Anderson, his Assistant Adjutant General. Anderson told Hill that "my corps had been placed under command of Lieutenant General Polk as wing commander, and that the general wished to see me that night at Alexander's Bridge, 3 miles distant."[24] Hill stopped to rest until 3:00 a.m., then continued to Alexander's bridge.

Breckinridge meanwhile, had bivouacked his division short of Hill's Corps' position; having received permission to do so from Polk. Breckinridge spent the night at Polk's campfire, leaving "two hours before daylight the 20th, to place my command in position."[25] Breckinridge, guided by Lieutenant reid, reached his position on Cleburne's right a little after daylight.

General Hill, his reinforcements delayed by General Polk, never found Polk that night. Cavalry escort troopers from Polk's headquarters remained posted as guides to those seeking their general only until about 2:00 a.m.[26] He

reached his corps about the same time as Breckinridge's Division. The courier sent to carry Polk's order for the daylight attack, Trooper Fisher, had searched for him between midnight and about 4:00. He had searched specifically for Hill, not taken the order to Hill's headquarters. Returning to Polk's headquarters, Fisher did not report his failure to Lieutenant Colonel Jack, Polk's Assistant Adjutant General. He was told by Colonel Jack's clerk that Jack was not to be disturbed.[27]

With the orders gone awry, the morning's attack was delayed while new orders were transmitted, soldiers were fed, and lines of battle organized. The attack did not begin until almost 10:00 a.m. By then the Federal soldiers, after hurriedly throwing up breastworks all night, had been allowed over three hours of daylight to further improve their positions.

Several command and staff actions could have helped both General Bragg and General Polk get their intent clearly across to the units on the north end of the army's line. First, a standard procedure for the conduct of orders conferences would have ensured that Bragg's "proper commanders" were in fact present at the meeting the night of the 19th. Hill could have then received his order assigning him to Polk's Corps directly from Bragg. All of the corps commanders could also have heard Bragg's operational concept for the next day's battle. I do not suggest that General

Bragg should have held a council of war. Bragg knew what he wanted done the next morning. What he did poorly was to communicate that idea to his subordinates. Contrasted with the lack of such a meeting in the Confederate army was the lengthy one held by Rosecrans with his senior commanders. Its effectiveness can be argued, but at least there was a common base of knowledge among the senior Union commanders on the essentials of Rosecrans' plan. The Confederates, without such a procedure, were dependent on a fragile communications system to work over confused terrain.

The second procedure that could have reduced the confusion would have been the use of multiple messages. This was often the procedure used when a message was of great importance. Two or three copies of the order would be sent by different couriers to the receiving headquarters. This increased the chances that at least one of the messengers would get through. This was not done with Polk's attack order the night of the 19th. Lieutenant Colonel Jack described the actions taken to distribute the order. Only one message each was sent to Generals Cheatham and Hill. General Walker, at Polk's headquarters when the order was issued, received his in person. The courier to General Cheatham returned, and reported that the message was delivered. He brought with him the empty envelope, a common technique of verifying delivery of a written message.[28]

The next morning, because General Hill had not yet been found with the attack order, additional orders were prepared for the individual division commanders in Hill's Corps. These orders directed them to attack as soon as their divisions were in position.[29] Two written orders were sent to these commanders. In this case, each set of orders was carried by a single staff officer. Captain Wheless carried three copies of the order, one each for Generals Cheatham (who got an information copy), Breckinridge, and Cleburne. Captain Williams was dispatched with another copy for these generals a little later.[30] Both were sent between 'daylight' and 'sunrise.' Both got through, although Captain Williams, meeting Captain Wheless on his return trip, went only to Cheatham's headquarters to let him know that the order had been delivered to Hill's division commanders.

The final procedural safeguard to ensure transmission of orders was (and remains) staff supervision. This topic is treated in the next section. But it clearly was needed in Polk's headquarters on the night of the 19th. Had a staff officer been awake in Polk's headquarters as trooper Fisher returned unsuccessfully from his mission; an earlier, more robust effort to find general Hill might have been made. Instead, two private soldiers, the failed courier and the clerk, determined that another attempt would be too late for the attack to start on time.

## PART IV: SEEING THE BATTLEFIELD

> "In considering the object proposed in connections with the positions of the enemy and the geography of the country, it will appear that in every strategic movement or tactical maneuver the question for decision will always be, whether to maneuver to the right, to the left, or directly in front.The selection of one of these three simple alternatives cannot, surely, be considered an enigma. The art of giving the proper direction to the masses is certainly the basis of strategy, although it is not the whole of the art of war. Executive talent, skill, energy, and a quick appreciation of events are necessary to carry out any combinations previously arranged."[31]
>
> Jomini

The final area for staff evaluation is the staff's ability to help their commander see the battlefield. By this I mean two things. The first is that the staff must inform the commander. The staff must acquire and accurately present information about the enemy situation, dispositions, readiness and intentions. They must similarly inform him about the state of his own command. They must be able to assess the effect of terrain and weather on both enemy and friendly capabilities. The second component of seeing the battlefield is the staff's exercise of supervision over subordinate staffs, and over subordinate units and commanders as appropriate. They do this as a matter of course in

the normal administration of the army, ensuring that regulations are followed, that a unit's equipment supplies are in good order, and assessing the state of unit training. During a campaign or in a battle the staff must know the commanders operational concept and his intent, monitor the actions of subordinate units, and have the authority to issue orders in the commander's name to correct errors or take advantage of opportunity.

Chapter 2 examined the workings of staff supervision as routinely performed by the army staff. Lieutenant Colonel Beard's Inspector General department is an example of the staff performing this duty skillfully. This chapter will focus on the staff's ability to inform their commander and assist in supervision during the campaign and battle. With the stresses imposed by active campaigning, the staff's performance shows less competence.

When it comes to seeing the battlefield, the best place to start is with an appreciation of the natural terrain and its man-made features. A commander and his staff must combine an eye for the military aspects of terrain with an understanding of their own and the enemy's operational objectives and tactical tendencies. Only then is an informed estimate of the effects of the terrain on both enemy and friendly forces possible. A reasoned appreciation of the terrain between Chattanooga and Tullahoma should have revealed the improbability of a Union advance on Bragg's

right flank. The problems of crossing the Cumberland Plateau, Sequatchie Valley, and Walden's Ridge with the bulk of General Rosecrans' army were formidable. Logistically supporting that army over the miserable roads from the McMinnville rail head would have been impossible. Only a fixation on Burnside's force threatening Knoxville allowed Bragg and his senior commanders to believe their right flank to be the target of Rosecrans' main effort. The first staff failure of the campaign was therefore the failure to analyze the terrain effect on the enemy force.

Equally important as terrain in seeing the battlefield is to see both one's own and the enemy forces. General Bragg used his staff officers to keep him informed of the operations of his subordinate units during the battle. Colonel Taylor Beatty, his Judge Advocate, was used in this way. On September 19, he recorded in his diary, "Early in morning Genl. Bragg ordered me to the front & to remain there to report by couriers the progress of the fight."[32] On the 20th,

> "Ordered to bring up Gist's brig. & then to front to report as yesterday -- about 1 p.m. ordered to contact a portion of 46th Geo. Rgt. which has just come up to Gist's brigade. Had great difficulty in finding it on account of change in our lines since morning. get into enemy's line of skirmishers and narrowly escape -- a man killed by a shot fired at me -- can never forget his dying cry."[33]

After the withdrawal to Chattanooga in July, the Confederate cavalry was ordered to picket the Tennessee River. It was "of vital importance [to] know the position and movements of Rosecrans."[34] On the Confederate left flank, where Rosecrans' main attack would come, Major General Joseph Wheeler's cavalry corps had left only two regiments picketing the river from Decatur to Bridgeport. The remaining cavalry units were pulled back from the river and strung out along a broad area, nominally refitting. General Bragg sent a message to General Wheeler on 30 July, calling his attention to discipline problems with two of his units.[35]

By 6 September, General Bragg had one of his AIG officers, Major Pollack B. Lee, at General Wheeler's headquarters In Alpine, Georgia. His presence there may be an indication that Bragg was dissatisfied with the amount and quality of information Wheeler provided on Rosecrans' movements. However Wheeler notes that Major Lee "fully concurred with me" that the cavalry's first priority was to keep itself "in as good a condition as possible, as it would be indispensable to protect our lines of communication."[36] If Major Lee was sent there to invigorate Wheeler's reconnaissance effort, he failed.

Other than that incident, there is no indication that Bragg's staff ever checked how well Wheeler's command was performing its reconnaissance mission. Instead, he got

additional and conflicting missions. Wheeler's instructions were vague about what was the most important reason for his cavalry screen. The same order telling him to picket the river gives as the only reason the prevention of desertion. Later, Wheeler is urged to increase his vigilance against deserters.[37] The supposed primacy of his reconnaissance mission may be just that -- supposition. The failure of Wheeler to properly position his force is also the failure of Bragg's staff to articulate his mission properly and then supervise him in its execution.

These are just two examples of occasions where Bragg's staff did a poor job of helping him see the battlefield. Bragg's failure to understand on the evening of 20 September that he had won a significant victory was another such failure. This staff failure, by not highlighting to General Bragg the potential for a vigorous pursuit, threw away the potential fruits of a costly victory.

Staff supervision, while part of the function of seeing the battlefield, is also a separate function of the staff. If done aggressively, it can repair defects of vision. In the Army of Tennessee however, it was haphazardly done. To be done well, it requires staff officers who understand the commanders intent,and actively pursue firsthand knowledge of the tactical situation. They must be knowledgeable enough to spot errors of execution and to

recognize opportunity. Finally, they must have the authority to take action required by the situation.

An incident related by Lieut. Col. Sorrel illustrates how battlefield staff supervision ought to work, and how the command system in the Army of Tennessee blocked its potential effectiveness.

> ". . . a column of fours was seen marching across Gen. A.P. Stewart's front. If attacked, its destruction was certain. I pointed out the opportunity to General Stewart, his position being admirable for the purpose. His answer was that he was there by orders and could not move until he got others. I explained that I was chief of staff to Longstreet and felt myself competent to give such an order *as coming from my chief*, and that this was customary in our Virginia service. General Stewart, however, courteously insisted that he could not accept them unless assured the orders came direct from Longstreet. (Emphasis added.)[38]

The key in the above incident is that Lieut. Col. Sorrel, coming to the Army of Tennessee from Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, is used to working within a different staff environment than existed in Bragg's army. The practice of "our Virginia service" is a more sophisticated one, reflecting the beneficial effects of long-established organization. The frequently changing, often *ad hoc* organizations of the Army of Tennessee prevented the development of Sorrel's mature concept of the battlefield role of a chief of staff.

When staff supervision of execution is seen, it often focused on whether an order was received, or on whether a unit moved on time. On September 18th, Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson moved his division at 5:00 a.m. from Catoosa Station towards Leet's Tanyard (modern Beaumount). He had not received the general attack order for that day issued by General Bragg's headquarters the night before. Two couriers reached him that morning, giving him his new orders to attack across Reed's Bridge and turn south to Lee and Gordon's Mills.[39] After turning the command around (Reed's Bridge was in another direction than they had been moving), Johnson moved off down the Reed's Bridge - Ringgold road. Just short of Peavine Ridge, he met Captain Thompson, Bragg's assistant chief of artillery. The Captain had been sent to check Johnson's progress. By his action, Bragg's headquarters knew of Johnson's location and situation.

Seldom does the staff seem to consistently look for ways a subordinate unit might be assisted in accomplishing its mission. As he left Peeler's Mill, Johnson was joined by Major Felix Robertson, who commanded Bragg's reserve artillery. This officer brought eight pieces of artillery to augment the three batteries already supporting Johnson's force. They had clearly been sent before Capt. Smith could make his report. At this time Johnson's Division (composed of Johnson's, Gregg's, and McNair's brigades) had attached to it Robertson's brigade from Hood's Division. Major

General John B. Hood would join Johnson's force that afternoon at Reed's Bridge. Before the next morning, the other two brigades from Hoods Division would also come from Catoosa Station. Hood would command this corps with his subordinate, Brigadier General E. McIver Law, in command of Hood's Division.

Hood's brigades, coming from Virginia, had arrived before their artillery. It would not be present until after the battle By sending Robertson with these eight guns, some one on Bragg's staff had thought ahead. The eight guns would provide some support to Hood's Division, if not in the usual amount (one battery per brigade). Unfortunately, these guns would be detached from Hood's command the next morning.[40] When the time to commit Hood's division came on the afternoon of the 19th, they would go into battle without artillery. In that attack, Brigadier General Robertson would send three times for a battery to support his brigade, finally going himself. Casualties as a result were heavy in both Robertson's and Benning's brigades.[41] General Benning summarized the effect of their infantry-only attack.

> "We felt much in this engagement the want of artillery to oppose not only to the enemy's artillery but to his infantry; but none came to our aid. None had been attached either to my brigade or to Brigadier-General Robertson's.[42]

The arrival of the Virginia reinforcements without their organic artillery meant that the Army of Tennessee had to closely manage its guns. But there was no reason to allow a division to operate throughout the battle without artillery support if that support can be made available. This is what happened to Hood's Division. The army staff here failed in seeing the needs of their own force clearly. The result was a failed attack. Had this attack succeeded, it might have changed the pattern of the second days fight. By itself, supporting artillery may not have ensured the success of Hood's attack. However, the lack of it virtually guaranteed its failure.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Jomini, Art of War, 234.

[2]William P. Craighill, The Army Officer's Pocket Companion: Principally Designed for Staff Officers in the Field (New York: Van Nostrand, 1862), 4.

[3]See, for example, Special Orders No. 165, issued by General Johnston's headquarters, 23 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 538. It directed that Major General Walker's division, less Gregg's Brigade, report to General Bragg for temporary service. It specified, "No field transportation will be carried."

[4]William H. Harder, Reminiscences of Captain William Henry Harder, Co. D, 23d Tennessee Infantry Regiment, unpublished document in the files of the Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC, 6.

[5]Special Orders No. 241, Headquarters, Army of Tennessee, 10 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 635.

[6]Special Orders No. 243, Hqtrs, Army of Tennessee, 14 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 647-48.

[7]See M. H. Wright to Col. J. P. Jones, 19 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 672.

[8]Special Orders No 244, Hqtrs, Army of Tennessee, 15 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 652.

[9]Circular Order, Hqtrs Army of Tennessee, 17 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 660.

[10]Thomas M. Jack to Major R. M. Mason, 17 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 661.

[11]G. Moxley Sorrel, Recollections, 200.

[12]General Order No. 171, Hqtrs Army of Tennessee, 26 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 556-57.

[13]General Order No. 182, Hqtrs Army of Tennessee, 24 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 699-700.

[14]Report of Major John A. Cheatham, Chief Ordnance Officer, Cheatham's Division, Polk's Corps, 20 October 1863; O.R., XXX Pt. 2: 82. This is one of few brigades whose after action reports include both personnel strength during the battle and ammunition expenditure data.

[15]Circular Order, Hqtrs Army of Tennessee, 22 September 1863; O.R., Pt. 4: 690.

[16]Sorrel, Recollections, 188, 192.

[17]Ibid., 166, also: Report of Lieutenant General James Longstreet, C.S. Army, commanding Left Wing; O.R., XXX. Pt. 2: 287.

[18]Sorrel, Recollections, 199-200.

[19]Longstreet to Seddon, 26 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 705-6.

[20]Bragg to Cooper, 28 December 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 33. This report is written after Bragg's relief from command as a consequence of the defeats at both Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge.

[21]Circular Order, Hqtrs, Right Wing, 19 September 1863, 11:30 p.m.; O.R., XXX, Pt.2: 52.

[22]Cheatham to Polk, 30 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 63. This letter was written in response to a request for information from General Polk after his relief from corps command by General Bragg on 29 September.

[23]Report of Major General William H.T. Walker, C.S. Army, commanding Reserve Corps, 18 October 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 240-41.

[24]Report of Lieutenant General Daniel H. Hill, C.S. Army, commanding corps, undated; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 140.

[25]Report of Major General John C. Breckinridge, C.S. Army, commanding division, -- October 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 197

[26]Deposition of J. A. Perkins, 30 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 60. Deposition of L. Charvet, 30 September 1863; Ibid., 58-59.

[27]Deposition of John H. Fisher, 29 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 57-58.

[28]Statement of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas M. Jack, 29 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 58.

[29]T. M. Jack to Major Generals Cleburne and Breckinridge, 20 September 1863, 5:30 a.m.; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 52.

[30]Although Lieut. Col. Jack says that Capt. Wheless went with verbal orders, the Captain's statement is specific in referring to written orders. Jack statement, op cit. Statement of J. Minnick Williams, 30 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 60. Statement of J. Frank Wheless, 30 September 1863, Ibid., 61-62.

[31]Jomini, Art of War, 64.

[32]Extract from Colonel Taylor Beatty Diary, in the files of the Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC, page 4 of 6.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Special Orders No. 179, Hqtrs, Army of Tennessee, 7 July 1863; O.R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 902. Mackall to Wheeler, 9 July 1863; Ibid., 904.

[35]Kinloch Falconer to Wheeler, 30 July 1863; O.R., XXIII, Pt. 2: 938.

[36]Wheeler to Lieut. Col. Brent, 6 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 614-15.

[37]Brent to Wheeler, 17 August 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 4: 502.

[38]Sorrel, 201.

[39]Report of Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson, C.S. Army, commanding Provisional Division, 24 October 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 451, 467.

[40]Ibid., 453.

[41]Report of Brigadier Jerome B. Robertson, C.S. Army, commanding brigade, 4 October 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt. 2: 510-12. Report of Brigadier General Henry L. Benning, C.S. Army, commanding brigade, 8 October 1863; Ibid., 517-19.

[42]Ibid., 518.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite the proliferation of staff doctrine since 1863, an army staff today has the same essential functions that General Bragg's did. It must make sure that the army receives enough personnel and materiel to meet its needs. It must help the commander see the battlefield accurately in formulating his operational concept; and translate that concept into clear plans and orders. It must then transmit those orders to subordinates in a timely and accurate manner. Finally, it must act as the commander's directed telescope, supervising the execution of orders to further the accomplishment of the army's mission.

The staffs at corps and army level within the Army of Tennessee present an uneven picture of effective operations. In the logistics area, where they were structurally concentrated and their commanders enjoyed the greatest expertise, staffs performed adequately. They fed and armed the army, and equipped it with its materiel needs. Transportation was a problem during this campaign, and would remain one afterwards. A shortage of doctors and medical

supplies prevented the Confederates from achieving the same standard of care for its sick, injured, or wounded that the Union did. All in all, the logistics staff kept the army sustained despite the burdens of the Confederacy's poorly organized supply system, and the effects of moving its logistics base during the campaign. There is evidence of both anticipation of future materiel needs, and of improvisation to solve problems and minimize the adverse effects of transportation bottlenecks. If it is true that the army did not have all it needed, it appears also true that it attempted to best use what it had.

In the day-to-day administration of the army, the staff did a creditable job. Routine reports were handled routinely (this is not always as easy as it seems at first reading). Inspectors checked unit conditions and mandated corrections. The staff published orders for movements, reorganizations, and other administrative needs as a matter of course. Correspondence seemed well handled.

As operational staffs, those of the Army of Tennessee performed less well. It appears that the army staff was a victim of 'group think' in assessing Rosecrans' intentions during the campaign. It never succeeded in developing a good picture of its opponents actions and dispositions during the maneuver phase of the campaign. Its orders were often unclear, even by the standard of the day. The corps staffs performed no better. General Polk's staff allowed

the attack order for the 20th to go undelivered to the critical subordinate. Longstreet's staff was not present in enough numbers to make a difference during the battle. In large measure, they were still fighting the battle of their deployment into the theater.

It is in looking at the function of the entire command and control system within the army that one sees the most serious problems. Staff performance is only a part of this system, of course, and a detailed evaluation of the skills and faults of the army and corps commanders is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, the poisoned relations within this level of command had to affect staff performance. The attitude of General Stewart in his rejection of Lieutenant Colonel Sorrel's order to attack reflects more than just insecurity among commanders. A command climate where each order is examined for its liability to be a set-up for failure both undercuts the chain of command and inhibits the development of an effective system of staff supervision. The situation within the Army of Tennessee in August and September 1863 could not improve without a wholesale shake-up of its commanders. The quality of its operational staff work needed improvement, but the army's command and control system needed much more than just improved staff work.

Even in this poisoned command climate, the staff had a responsibility to assist their commander in seeing the

battlefield and impose his will upon it. Their inability to adequately supervise the execution of the commander's plans -- during the maneuver phase of the campaign, at Dug Gap and Rock Spring, and on the night of the 19th and morning of the 20th -- combined with the bad relations between the army and corps commanders to cost the Army of Tennessee the fruits of its victory.

What were the limits of the staff to improve their performance? By 1863, the staff officers had considerable experience in their areas of responsibility. Still, those with prior military experience or even the rudiments of military training or education had long since moved to command within the line regiments and brigades. Frequent organizational changes meant that staff officers in this campaign were often working in a larger unit than they were familiar with. This meant increased responsibility and more need for staff coordination. Supervision of these inexperienced corps and division staffs (used to functioning at division or brigade) was more important. The army staff shows little sign of realizing this. The new corps and division staffs were busy mastering the complexities of their ever-changing organizations. They had little time to monitor or coach similarly struggling staffs below them.

Finally, the staffs were best able to learn what their commanders were able to teach them. The corps commanders had all been exposed to staff work in the pre-war

U.S. Army. But that exposure was to administrative and logistical staff operations. Developing a feel for the nuances of operational staff work within one's own staff personnel was something these commanders were not able to do.

In the final analysis, despite the good performance of the staff in their specific areas of responsibility, the army's command and control system failed during this campaign and battle. A contributing cause of that failure was the staff's inability to function as their commanders' directed telescope. Battlefield supervision of subordinate units and commanders was especially poor.

The result of the command and control failure was the army's inability to follow up on the victory its soldiers won on the field. Union Major General Thomas' desperate rear guard action after Longstreet's breakthrough saved both the Army of the Cumberland, and the Union position in Chattanooga. Effective battlefield supervision by Confederate staff officers might have shown the weakness of Thomas' position, and allowed more effective attacks on it. Better use of the cavalry, the Chickamauga campaign's forgotten arm, could have materially affected the outcome as well. Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk, writing to General Lee on 27 September, said, "We have gained a signal victory under God's blessing over our enemy, but I greatly fear we are about to lose the fruits of it for want of the necessary

capacity to reap them."[1] The lack of capacity he meant was in General Bragg. In truth the lack of capacity was in the entire command and control system of the Army of Tennessee.

This thesis has examined the personnel and performance of the staff of the Army of Tennessee and its subordinate corps. It only addresses part of the answer to the question of how well the staff performed and why. I believe there are several areas which are amenable to further research. The Compiled Service Records have limitations in both the kind and quality of information they yield on individual staff officers. Examination of returns from the 1860 census may provide more data on the ages, education, and civilian occupations of these officers. Access to the personal papers, correspondence, and diaries of the staff principals may reveal other staff assistants than have been found in my research; or provide indications of staff interactions not contained in the collected correspondence of the Official Record. The staff personnel of the cavalry commanders have been particularly hard to identify. Finally, more research into the pre-war economic life of the western Confederacy would either confirm or disprove my general thoughts on the degree to which could provide managers to the Army of Tennessee.

## CHAPTER NOTES

[1]Polk to Lee, 27 September 1863; O.R., XXX, Pt 4: 708.

## APPENDIX 1

## ARMY OF TENNESSEE ORDER OF BATTLE

RIGHT WING
Lt. Gen. Leonidas K. Polk

POLK'S CORPS
- Cheatham's Division
  - Jackson's Brigade
  - Maney's Brigade
  - Smith's Brigade
  - Wright's Brigade
  - Strahl's Brigade
- Hindman's Division (assigned to Longstreet)

HILL'S CORPS
- Cleburne's Division
  - Wood's Brigade
  - Polk's Brigade
  - Deshler's Brigade
- Breckenridge's Division
  - Helm's Brigade
  - Adam's Brigade
  - Stovall's Brigade

WALKER'S RESERVE CORPS
- Walker's Division
  - Gist's Brigade
  - Ector's Brigade
  - Wilson's Brigade
- Liddell's Division
  - Liddel's Brigade
  - Walthall's Brigade

LEFT WING
Lt. Gen. James Longstreet

BUCKNER'S CORPS
- Stewart's Division
  - Bate's Brigade
  - Clayton's Brigade
  - Brown's Brigade
- Preston's Division
  - Gracie's Brigade
  - Kelly's Brigade
  - Trigg's Brigade
- Hindman's Division (detached from Polk's Corps)
  - Anderson's Brigade
  - Deas' Brigade
  - Manigault's Brigade

HOOD'S CORPS
- McLaw's Division
  - Kershaw's Brigade
  - Humphrey's Brigade
- Johnson's Division
  - Johnson's Brigade
  - Gregg's Brigade
  - McNair's Brigade
- Hood's Division
  - Law's Brigade
  - Robertson's Brigade
  - Benning's Brigade

## CONFEDERATE CAVALRY

### WHEELER'S CORPS

Wharton's Division
- Crew's Brigade
- Harrison's Brigade

Martin's Division
- Morgan's Brigade
- Russell's Brigade
- Roddy's Brigade

### FORREST'S CORPS

Armstrong's Division
- Armstrong's Brigade
- Forrest's Brigade

Pegram's Division
- Davidson's Brigade
- Scott's Brigade

## APPENDIX 2

## SURVEY OF STAFF OFFICERS

| Rank/Name | Home State | Staff Dept | Cmdr | Time with: Dept | Cmdr |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lieut M. Pointer | Miss | Aide | Wheeler | 10 | 10 |
| Lieut A.H. Polk | La | Aide | Polk | 22 | 22 |
| Lt Col M.T. Polk | Tenn | Ch Arty | Polk | 10 | 10 |
| Lieut W.M. Polk | Tenn | Arty Off | Polk | 7 | 7 |
| Maj E.S. Burford | La | AAG | Wheeler | 9 | 9 |
| Maj T.K. Porter | Tenn | Ch Arty | Buckner | 4 | 3 |
| Lieut R.H. Morrison | N.C. | Aide | Hill | 11 | 11 |
| Maj W.C. Duxbury | Ala | Ch Ord | Hill | 19 | 4 |
| Maj. A.C. Avery | N.C. | AIG | Hill | 11 | 11 |
| Maj B.G. Thomas | Ky | ACS | Wheeler | 10 | 5 |
| Maj Wm. Clare | Ala | AIG | Bragg | 14 | 14 |
| Lt Col T.F. Sevier | Tenn | AIG/AAG | Polk | 11 | 10 |
| Lieut J.M. Sharp | Ky | Aide | Buckner | 12 | 12 |
| Lt Col Bondurant | Va | Ch Arty | Hill | 15 | 6 |
| Maj O.P. Chaffie | Va | Ch QM | Wheeler | 18 | 5 |
| Surg W.C. Cavanaugh | Tenn | Med Dir | Polk | 18 | 16 |
| Surg F.A. Stanford | Ga | Med Dir | Wheeler | 10 | 10 |
| Capt G. Turner | Va | AAG | Wheeler | 5 | 5 |
| Capt E.H. Ewing | Tenn | Ch QM | Hill | 5 | 2 |
| Col A. Ewing | Tenn | JAG | Polk | 10 | 11 |
| Capt L. Conner | La | AAG | Bragg | 15 | 17 |
| Surg A. Erskine | Ala | Med Dir | Hill | 4 | 2 |
| Surg J.F. Young | Ky | Med Pvyr | Hill | 23 | 2 |
| BG W.W. Mackall | Md | CofS | Bragg | 5 | 5 |
| Lieut T.B. MacKall | Md | Aide | Bragg | 17 | 17 |
| Lieut A. Nichol | -- | Aide | Wheeler | 7 | 7 |
| Maj J.W. Nocquet | Ky | Engr | Buckner | 24 | 8 |
| Surg T.W. Nichols | Tenn | Surg | Bragg | 10 | 10 |
| Lieut B.F. Nichols | -- | Ord Off | Bragg | 24 | 6 |
| Lieut B. Nichols | -- | Ord Off | Bragg | 5 | 5 |
| Lieut J.A. Reid | N.C. | Aide | Hill | 15 | 15 |
| Capt Wm.A. Reid | La | AIG | Bragg | -- | -- |
| Lieut W.B. Richmond | Tenn | Aide | Polk | 23 | 23 |
| Surg T.G.Richardson | La | Med Insp | Bragg | 10 | 10 |
| Capt J.N. Galleher | Ky | AAG | Buckner | 23 | 23 |

## SURVEY OF STAFF OFFICERS

| Rank/Name | Home State | Staff Dept | Cmdr | Time with: Dept | Cmdr |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lieut W.D. Gale | Miss | Aide | Polk | 7 | 7 |
| Maj R.M. Mason | Ala | QM | Polk | 22 | 22 |
| Maj Wm.F. Mastin | Ala | AAG | Buckner | 22 | 9 |
| Lieut W.N.M. Otey | Tenn | Sig Off | Polk | 14 | 22 |
| Capt T.E. Powell | Ky | AAG | Wheeler | 5 | 5 |
| Capt D.G. Reed | Ky | AAG | Wheeler | 13 | 14 |
| Capt P.L. Darling | Ark | ACS | Bragg | 14 | 14 |
| Lt Col H. Oladowski | La | Ch Ord | Bragg | 30 | 30 |
| Maj M.B. McMicken | Fla | Ch QM | Bragg | 29 | 29 |
| Maj P.B. Lee | Tenn | AIG | Bragg | 18 | 3 |
| Lt Col D. Urquhart | -- | AAG | Bragg | 21 | 19 |
| Lieut J.G. Mann | -- | Engr | Forrest | 17 | 5 |
| Lieut T.H. Kenan | Ga | Aide | Walker | 6 | 6 |
| Maj J.L. Cross | Fla | AAG | Hill | 18 | 7 |
| Maj J.S. Johnston | Ky | AAG | Buckner | 5 | 2 |
| Lieut G.D. Lamar | Ga | Aide | Walker | 25 | 3 |
| Surg W.C. Nichols | Tenn | Surg | Polk | 22 | 12 |

Abbreviations Used:

| | |
|---|---|
| AAG | Assistant Adjutant General |
| ACS | Assistant Commissary of Subsistence |
| Aide | Aide-de-Camp |
| AIG | Assistant Inspector General |
| Ch Arty | Chief of Artillery |
| Ch Ord | Chief of Ordnance |
| CofS | Chief of Staff |
| Ch QM | Chief Quartermaster |
| Engr | Engineer |
| JAG | Judge Advocate |
| Med Dir | Medical Director |
| Med Pvyr | Medical Purveyor |
| Ord Off | Ordnance Officer |
| QM | Quartermaster |
| Sig Off | Signals Officer |
| Surg | Surgeon |

**Note:** Time expressed as nearest whole months.

## NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The staff officers identified in this study were found in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. I first examined the correspondence and the after action reports of all of the Confederate brigade, division, and corps commanders, as well as that of General Bragg. These names were then cross-checked with the list of staff officers for each Confederate general officer compiled by Joseph H. Crute, Jr. in his book, Confederate Staff Officers, 1861 - 1865. After assembling a candidate list, I checked the names against the Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Nonregimental Enlisted Men. This is a collection of War Department records available on microfilm from the National Archives.

In this process, I identified additional staff officers with the Army of Tennessee during the Chickamauga campaign. I also found some who had left the command before the start of the campaign. Only those officers who can be identified *in a primary source* as belonging to the staff during the campaign are listed in the tables in Chapter Three.

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